

CONFIDENTIAL.

(6122.)

PART III.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

C O N F E R E N C E

RELATING TO

S L A V E T R A D E ,

HELD AT BRUSSELS: 1889-90.

July to December 1890.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
1	British Plenipotentiaries	51 Telegraphic	July 1, 1890	Signature of General Act and Declaration. Would Lord Salisbury authorize signature of latter if left open to Holland? ..	1
2	" "	52 Telegraphic	1,	Refers above. Signature of Act and Declaration. King refuses to leave Declaration open to Holland. Does Lord Salisbury accept French proposal? ..	1
3	To Lord Vivian ..	56 Telegraphic	1,	Signature of Act and Declaration. Authorizes stating that it cannot come into force without assent of all Signatories of Berlin Act ..	2
4	" "	188	1,	Slave Trade Treaty with Spain. Approves amended draft of Article VII ..	2
5	" "	195	1,	Notes of Slave Trade Conference sitting in Commission, taken by Secretariat, should not be published ..	2
6	" "	189	2,	Meeting of 19th June. Approves statements made at ..	2
7	" "	190	2,	Transit of arms clause. Approves reply to Portuguese Plenipotentiaries ..	3
8	" "	191	2,	Slaves represented as domestic servants. Transmits despatch from Sir W. White. (Part II, No. 144) ..	3
9	To Sir E. Malet ..	265	2,	Refers to No. 490, Part II. Approves ..	3
10	To Mr. Fane ..	14	2,	Approves No. 444, Part II ..	3
11	Sir H. Rumbold ..	18	2,	Import duties. Congo State. Dutch Government disavow Baron de Gericke on account of Rotterdam Company ..	4
12	Edinburgh Total Abstinence Society	..	2,	Copy of Resolution, hoping righteous prohibition be extended to intoxicating liquors ..	4
13	Parliamentary question (Sir George Campbell)	..	3,	Imposition of duties in Africa ..	5
14	Parliamentary question (Mr. Sydney Buxton)	..	3,	Signature of the General Act by the Powers ..	5
15	British Plenipotentiaries	204	2,	General Act and Declaration. Reports signature of. Incloses speech and declaration of Lord Vivian ..	6
16	Sir W. White ..	Telegraphic	4,	Sultan has authorized Ottoman Plenipotentiary to sign General Act ..	7
17	Mr. Gosselin ..	206	4,	Reports dinner given at the Palace, Brussels, to the Conference ..	8
18	" "	208	5,	Turkish Minister received powers to sign General Act, making reservation as to Article XXXIV ..	8
19	" "	209	6,	Refers to No. 15. Incloses copy of Declaration signed by United States and Congo Free State, relating to free entry of American merchandize ..	8
20	To Edinburgh Total Abstinence Society	..	7,	Acknowledges receipt of No. 12 ..	10
21	To Liverpool Chamber of Commerce	..	8,	Refers to No. 483, Part II. Her Majesty's Government have agreed to modification of engagements prohibiting duties in the Congo State ..	10
22	Mr. Gosselin ..	210	8,	Refers to No 18. President admitting modification of Article XXXIV. Ottoman Plenipotentiary will sign General Act ..	10
23	" "	211	8,	Incloses three copies of General Act (see Protocol No. 24) ..	11
24	Mr. Fane ..	12	4,	Refers to No. 395, Part II. Sultan's Iradé, authorizing Ottoman Plenipotentiary to sign General Act sent to Sublime Porte ..	11
25	" "	13	4,	Refers to No. 485, Part II. Further account of negotiations resulting in Sultan's Iradé (see No. 24 above) ..	11
26	To Sir J. Pauncefote..	24	11,	Transmits copy of inclosure in No. 19 above ..	12

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
27	Lord Vivian ..	40	July 10, 1890	Reports Bill laid before Belgian Parliament for loan of 25,000,000 fr. to Congo State. Transmits copies of Prime Minister's statement, and of the proposed Agreement between Belgium and Congo, also of an extract from "l'Indépendance Belge" ..	12
28	" ..	213	11,	Acknowledges great assistance derived from Mr. Wyld and Sir P. Anderson ..	21
29	" ..	217	12,	Powers consent to modification of Article XXXIV, demanded by the Porte ..	22
30	" ..	218	13,	Assents to omission of Baron de Gericke's withdrawn Declaration in Protocols 29 and 30 ..	22
31	To Lord Vivian ..	197	16,	Refers to No. 15. Appreciation of services ..	23
32	To Sir E. Malet ..	272	17,	Transmits copy of No. 25 ..	23
33	To Lord Vivian ..	198	18,	Approves of Declaration, of which copy is inclosed in No. 15 ..	23
34	To Mr. Fane ..	16	18,	Answers No. 25, and approves ..	23
35	Lord Vivian ..	219	18,	Turkish Minister signs General Act. Settlement of Article XXXIV. Holland holds aloof ..	24
36	" ..	220	19,	Aborigines Protection Society records its grateful appreciation of services to humanity ..	24
37	" ..	221	19,	Answers No. 31 above ..	25
38	To Lord Vivian ..	199	21,	Answers No. 30, and approves ..	25
39	Birmingham Chamber of Commerce ..	..	22,	Protests against imposition of import duties in the Congo State ..	25
40	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	4	24,	Transmits copy of No. 35 ..	27
41	Mr. Fane ..	14	16,	Inclosing copy of a letter from Carathéodory Effendi to Saïd Pasha, showing that the Turkish Plenipotentiary had not worked to retard conclusion of Conference ..	27
42	Colonel Euan-Smith ..	274	2,	Incloses copies of letters from Sir J. Kirk to Sultan of Zanzibar with reference to proceedings at Conference and certain proposals made thereat in regard to import duties in Zanzibar ..	28
43	Lord Vivian ..	223	24,	No certain prospect of Holland signing General Act within six months ..	29
44	Sir H. Rumbold ..	19	24,	Reports conversation with M. Hartzen on the attitude of the Netherlands Government ..	29
45	" ..	20	24,	Refers to No. 44. Further remarks of M. Hartzen on management of affairs in Congo State ..	30
46	To Birmingham Chamber of Commerce ..	..	30,	Answers No. 39 ..	31
47	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	12	Aug. 2,	Answers No. 44, and approves ..	31
48	Lord Vivian ..	224	1,	Pope returns thanks for homage rendered him by Conference ..	31
49	Sir W. White ..	16	2,	Refers to No. 34. Instructions followed ..	32
50	Lord Vivian ..	229	9,	Baron Lambertmont hopes that when the General Act and Declaration have been laid before Parliament, the Netherlands Government may be again approached in negotiating for its adhesion to General Act, and for its participation on Tariff Commission ..	32
51	Sir H. Rumbold ..	22	11,	Visit of Mr. Fox. Suggestion of an enhanced duty in spirits in Congo State ..	32
52	" ..	23	11,	Interview of Mr. Fox with Rotterdam Company. Complaints of maladministration in Congo States ..	33
52*	Mr. F. W. Fox ..	..	15,	Dutch refusal to sign. His visit to the Hague. Suggestions ..	34*
53	Sir H. Rumbold ..	24	18,	Refers to No. 50. Little disposition on the part of Netherlands Government to participate in Tariff Commission ..	34
54	Leeds Chamber of Commerce ..	..	18,	Supports Memorial of Liverpool Chamber (see No. 483, Part II) ..	34
55	Colonel Euan-Smith ..	227	20,	Sultan of Zanzibar wishes to know whether proposed measures referred to in No. 42 are likely to be realized ..	34
56	Sir H. Rumbold ..	25	20,	Refers to No. 53. Mutual ill-will of Belgium and Holland ..	35

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
57	Sir H. Rumbold ..	27	Aug. 22, 1890	Dutch Government have always opposed claim of Italy to represent Abyssinia at Brussels..	35
58	Lord Vivian ..	232	23,	Baron Lambertmont proposes to publish a temperate version of the dispute with Holland to open up a way for making substantive proposals to Netherlands Government, which he hopes Her Majesty's Minister at the Hague will be authorized to support ..	36
59	To Colonel Euan-Smith ..	95	25,	Refers to No. 55. Sir J. Kirk will himself explain points which Sultan of Zanzibar does not understand ..	36
60	To Leeds Chamber of Commerce ..	..	26,	Refers to No. 54. Similar answer to that given in No. 21 ..	36
61	To Mr. Fox ..	..	27,	Acknowledges receipt of his letter of the 15th instant ..	37
62	Sir H. Rumbold ..	29	Sept. 4,	Difficulty with the Dutch Government ought to be settled as speedily as possible ..	37
63	Lord Vivian ..	233	5,	Netherlands Government ought to be assured that the attitude of the Powers is not that of indifference. Incloses copy of article from "l'Indépendance Belge" ..	38
64	Messrs. Hatton and Cookson ..	..	8,	Complains of the duties on ivory and rubber levied in the Congo ..	41
65	British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society ..	..	9,	Resolution trusting Dutch Government will withdraw opposition to Conference measures	42
66	Sir H. Rumbold ..	30	10,	Incloses copy of extract from "Dagblad," also extracts from Protocols of Berlin Conference, 1884-85 ..	42
67	Messrs. Hale and Son, and Messrs. Jacob and Co. ..	..	9,	To complain of the duties imposed in Congo Free State ..	45
68	Sir H. Rumbold ..	31	11,	Refers to No. 58. Italian Minister has not encouraged the Dutch Government in their resistance to imposition of import duties in Congo ..	45
69	Lord Vivian ..	235	13,	Negus of Ethiopia adheres to General Act ..	45
70	" " ..	236	13,	Project of Tariff to be submitted to Technical Commission ..	46
70*	Sir W. White ..	17	12,	Slave Trade Bureau. Suggests communication to Porte respecting action of Representative ..	46 A
71	Baron Solvyns ..	..	16,	As to the means of notifying to the Sultan of Zanzibar the adhesion of the Negus of Abyssinia to the General Act ..	46
72	" " ..	..	16,	Notifies adhesion of Negus to General Act ..	47
73	To Lord Vivian ..	231	20,	Refers to No. 70. Transmits copy of No. 64, and asks for observations thereon ..	47
74	To Messrs. Hatton and Cookson ..	..	20,	Refers to No. 64. Acknowledges receipt of ..	48
75	To Messrs. Hale and Son ..	..	20,	Refers to No. 67. Acknowledges receipt of ..	48
76	Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce ..	..	22,	Memorial protesting against the granting of a Charter to the Oil Rivers Company ..	48
77	Lord Vivian ..	238	20,	Refers to No. 70. Baron Lambertmont's project of Tariff for the Congo State. He thinks that these moderate proposals may remove objections of the Netherlands Government ..	49
78	To Baron Solvyns ..	..	22,	Refers to No. 72. Acknowledges receipt of ..	50
79	To British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society ..	..	24,	Refers to No. 65. Acknowledges receipt of ..	50
80	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	17	24,	Incloses copy of No. 65 ..	50
81	To Baron Solvyns ..	..	26,	Refers to No. 71. Acknowledges and approves proposed form of notification ..	51
82	Lord Vivian ..	239	23,	Incloses two articles from the "Journal de Bruxelles," commenting on the Acts of the Berlin Conference, and refusal of the Netherlands Government to sign the Declaration; also reports Resolution of the Anti-Slavery Congress ..	51
83	" " ..	240	26,	Report of proceedings at Anti-Slavery Congress at Paris ..	58
84	" " ..	241	27,	Conversation with the King of the Belgians on the projected Tariff. His Majesty considers some of the proposed duties too low ..	62

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
85	Lord Vivian ..	70	Sept. 27, 1890	Refers to No. 73. Policy of Congo Government with regard to duties on ivory and india-rubber ..	62
86	Sir H. Rumbold ..	33	27,	Refers to Nos. 63 and 70. Dutch continue to cling to letter of Article IV of the Berlin Act..	63
87	" ..	34	27,	Holland secretly encouraged in her attitude by the Representatives of some of the Powers ..	64
88	To Sir W. White ..	22	29,	Representations to be made to the Porte in the sense suggested by Mr. Marinitch in his Memorandum ..	65
89	Sir H. Rumbold ..	37	Oct. 3,	Incloses extract from the "Courrier de la Meuse," stating that the Dutch Government had prohibited importation of spirits in certain islands in the East Indies..	65
89*	Colonel Euan-Smith ..	267	4,	Zanzibar Representatives at Conference. Sultan wishes to decorate ..	65*
90	To Lord Vivian ..	242	4,	Acknowledges receipt of No. 84, and approves	66
91	Sir H. Rumbold ..	36	2,	Representations made to M. Hartsen in course of conversation as to obloquy which the Dutch would incur if they maintained their attitude with regard to the General Act and Declaration ..	66
92	Lord Vivian ..	242	4,	Letters from Cardinal Lavigerie to the King and Queen of the Netherlands, praying their Majesties to put an end to the Slave Trade by assenting to Acts of the Conference.	67
93	" ..	243	4,	Revised project of Tariff for Congo State ..	69
94	" ..	244	4,	No protest as yet received from the Powers notified of the adhesion of King Menelek to General Act ..	69
95	" ..	245	4,	French Government sincere in their desire for the final conclusion of the Acts of Brussels Conference. Baron Lambermont attaches great importance to support of Her Majesty's Government at the Hague..	70
96	Baron Solvyns ..	..	5,	Announces the opening of the negotiations for the conditions of the Congo customs to be fixed for the 21st October, or the 5th November, if desired. Incloses drafts of the proposed Rules, Formalities, Tariff, &c. ..	70
97	To Colonel Euan-Smith ..	116	9,	Queen's Regulations prevent Sir J. Kirk from accepting Sultan's offer of decoration ..	73
98	Sir H. Rumbold ..	38	8,	Incloses copy of article in the "Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant" on subject of Congo import duties ..	73
99	To Baron Solvyns ..	..	10,	Refers to No. 96. Her Majesty's Government would prefer opening of negotiations to be postponed to the 5th November..	75
100	Mr. Trench ..	116	8,	Baron Greindl has asked the German Government to bring pressure to bear on the Netherlands Government to get them to withdraw their opposition to the imposition of Congo duties ..	75
101	Lord Vivian ..	246	11,	Baron Lambermont has communicated to the Netherlands Minister the project of Tariff of Congo import duties. Should Holland accept the Tariff, recent Decrees of Congo Government would probably be modified ..	75
102	" ..	247	11,	Desire of the Sultan of Zanzibar that Sir J. Kirk and M. Göhring should represent His Highness on the Technical Commission ..	76
103	" ..	55	13,	Probable duration of Commission will not be more than a fortnight ..	77
104	To Board of Trade ..	..	13,	Transmits copy of No. 93, and asks for observations thereon. Announces the appointment of Sir J. Kirk and Mr. Gosselin as British Delegates ..	77
105	Sir H. Rumbold ..	39	10,	Conversation with the Russian Minister on the subject of the Congo duties ..	78
106	" ..	40	11,	The Roman Catholic leaders support the Dutch Government in their attitude of hostility to General Act and Declaration ..	78

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
107	Lord Vivian ..	249	Oct. 14, 1890	Refers to No. 94. M. de Giers made reserves to the title of "Negus Negesto of Ethiopia." Such reserves must be made to Italian Government ..	79
108	To Lord Vivian ..	59	15,	Inquires as to date fixed for the meeting of the Technical Commission ..	79
109	Lord Vivian ..	250	14,	Moderation of proposed Tariff duties made a favourable impression on Holland ..	80
110	To Lord Vivian ..	249	16,	Refers to No. 108. Incloses copies of Nos. 96 and 99 ..	80
111	To Count Hatzfeldt ..	..	17,	First meeting of Technical Commission fixed for 5th November ..	80
112	Lord Vivian ..	56	18,	Meeting of Technical Commission fixed for 5th November ..	81
113	" " ..	57	18,	Austrian, German, and Italian Ministers instructed to bring pressure to bear on Netherlands Government ..	81
114	To Lord Vivian ..	60	18,	Her Majesty's Government accept invitation to attend Technical Commission. Sir J. Kirk and Mr. Gosselin appointed British Delegates. Concurrence of Her Majesty's Government in proposal that Dutch Government should be invited to attend unofficially. Her Majesty's Minister at the Hague to act with his colleagues in pressing Dutch Government to recede from hostile attitude ..	81
115	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	Telegraphic	18,	Directed to urge Netherlands Government to consider expediency of sending Delegates to Technical Commission ..	81
116	To Lord Vivian ..	251	18,	Inclosing appointments of Sir J. Kirk and Mr. Gosselin joint Delegates on Technical Commission ..	81
117	To Sir J. Kirk and Mr. Gosselin ..	..	18,	Sir J. Kirk and Mr. Gosselin appointed joint Delegates on Technical Commission ..	82
118	To Treasury ..	..	18,	To request Lords Commissioners to sanction allowance to be allotted to Sir J. Kirk ..	82
119	Sir H. Rumbold ..	4	19,	Refers to No. 115. Will follow out his instructions ..	82
120	Lord Vivian ..	252	16,	Refers to No. 22. Incloses copy of Circular announcing that the Porte had agreed to the modification of Article 34 of the General Act, as accepted by the Powers ..	83
121	" " ..	253	18,	Refers to No. 114. Substance of No. 114 communicated to Prince de Chimay and Baron Lambermont ..	83
122	Sir H. Rumbold ..	41	16,	M. Hartzen is considering invitation made to Dutch Government to cause themselves to be represented unofficially on Technical Commission ..	84
123	" " ..	42	18,	Incloses extract from the "Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant," showing that the opposition of the Rotterdam Company to imposition of Congo duties was as uncompromising as ever ..	84
124	Sir E. Malet ..	125	18,	Refers to No. 100. German Minister at the Hague has been instructed to urge Dutch Government to accept the proposed Tariff ..	85
125	Sir H. Rumbold ..	43	19,	Refers to No. 115. German Minister has strongly pressed Dutch Government to accept Brussels Act ..	85
126	" " ..	44	19,	Strong representations of the German Minister to the Netherlands Government ..	85
127	" " ..	45	20,	Refers to No. 115. Instructions contained in No. 115 followed out. Interview with M. Hartzen ..	86
128	To Lord Vivian ..	252	21,	Refers to No. 121. Transmits copies of Nos. 105 to 115, 119 to 122, and 123 ..	87
129	Board of Trade ..	..	20,	Refers to No. 104. Acknowledges receipt of No. 104. Opinions of the Board of Trade on the proposed import duties in Congo State ..	87

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
130	Lord Vivian ..	254	Oct. 22, 1890	Dutch Government reconsidering their first decision not to take part in Technical Commission. Baron Lambertmont hopes that Her Majesty's Government do not object to United States of America being represented on Technical Commission. Incloses copies of pamphlet relative to protest of Dutch-African Company against duties in Congo State	87
131	Colonel Euan-Smith ..	398	3,	Sir J. Kirk has intimated to Sultan of Zanzibar that, should His Highness withdraw reserve under which he adhered to General Act, he may double his import duties. What advice should be given to Sultan?	91
132	To Lord Vivian ..	257	24,	Refers to No. 102. Sir J. Kirk and M. Göhring to represent Sultan at Conference ..	92
133	Lord Vivian ..	255	23,	Extract from "Bien Public" newspaper on the non-adhesion of Netherlands to Brussels Declaration	93
134	Sir H. Rumbold ..	46	24,	Refers to Nos. 101 and 109. Netherlands Government invited to be represented in Technical Commission. No instructions had reached French Minister to support other powers in pressing Dutch Government	95
135	Lord Vivian ..	256	24,	Copy of note inviting Netherlands Government to be represented officially on Technical Commission, and without incurring any obligation to be bound by its decisions	96
136	Sir H. Rumbold ..	47	25,	Copy of same note as No. 135. M. Hartzen observed it was impossible for Dutch to accept import duties. He had a scheme of his own to propose	97
137	Baron Solvyns ..	..	25,	Transmits copy of No. 135, together with Projet de Tarif and Formalités	98
138	Lord Vivian ..	58 Telegraphic	27,	Might be well for Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris to urge M. Ribot to authorize French Minister at the Hague to bring pressure to bear on Netherlands Government	100
139	M. de Gevers ..	..	27,	Scheme for raising the funds required for Congo State by other means than by import duties ..	100
140	Sir H. Rumbold ..	5 Telegraphic	28,	Netherlands Government accept invitation to attend Technical Commission. Counter-proposals of the Dutch Government	100
141	Lord Vivian ..	259	28,	Netherlands Government propose as alternative schemes a subsidy subscribed by the Powers or an increased duty on spirits	101
142	Sir H. Rumbold ..	48	28,	Transmits copy of Dutch counter-proposals. French alone have not urged Dutch to be represented on Technical Commission	101
143	M. de Gevers ..	..	28,	Memorandum on Dutch counter-proposals ..	103
144	Lord Vivian ..	59 Telegraphic	29,	Refers to No. 141. Dutch will send Delegates unofficially to Technical Commission, though to be no way pledged to decisions of Commission	104
145	M. de Gevers ..	..	29,	Copy of Dutch proposals same as No. 142 ..	104
146	Lord Vivian ..	260	29,	Baron Lambertmont declares that Commission should proceed with its labours while the Powers considered the Dutch proposals	104
147	Sir W. White ..	20	15,	Copy of Circular of the Sublime Porte respecting Black slaves accompanying their masters, and represented as domestic servants ..	105
148	" ..	22	17,	Incloses Circular sent by Munir Pasha to Valis throughout Ottoman Empire enjoining strict observance of laws prohibiting the Slave Trade	106
149	Lord Vivian ..	257	25,	Action of Holland in regard to Congo Duties Commission. Position of affairs	107
150	Earl of Lytton ..	142	30,	Agreement of Holland to take part in Technical Commission	108
150*	Lord Vivian ..	261	30,	Mr. Banning's pamphlet. Sends	108*
151	" ..	262	31,	Refers to his No. 199 of the 28th June. Questions requiring instructions for Delegates ..	108

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
152	Sir H. Rumbold ..	49	Oct. 31, 1890	Russian Minister's attitude towards Holland regarding Act and Declaration ..	109
153	Imperial British East Africa Company ..	..	31,	Desirability of obtaining sanction of Powers to the levying of duties in East Africa directly under control of Great Britain ..	110
154	Colonel Euan-Smith ..	410	10,	Former Plenipotentiaries to represent Sultan of Zanzibar at Technical Commission ..	110
155	Sir E. Malet ..	133	31,	King of the Belgians counts on the assistance of German Government in bringing pressure to bear on Holland. Hopes for that of England ..	111
156	Lord Vivian ..	263	Nov. 1,	List of Powers, with their Delegates, accepting invitation to take part in Technical Commission ..	111
157	" ..	264	1,	Germany supports King of the Belgians. Considers Dutch alternative proposals unacceptable. Attitude of French and Russian Governments ..	112
158	To Baron Solvyns ..	..	3,	Acknowledges receipt of No. 137 ..	113
159	To M. de Gevers ..	..	3,	Acknowledges receipt of No. 145 ..	113
160	" ..	..	3,	Acknowledges receipt of No. 139 ..	114
161	" ..	..	3,	Acknowledges receipt of No. 143 ..	114
161A	Lord Vivian ..	60	3,	Congo Technical Commission. Difficulty raised by Porte ..	114*
161B	To Lord Vivian ..	262	4,	Dutch refusal to sign. Sends M. de Gevers' October 27th and 28th. Her Majesty's Government's views ..	114*
161C	To Sir W. White ..	Telegraphic	4,	Repeats No. 161 A. To induce Porte to join in Commission ..	114*
162	Sir H. Rumbold ..	50	1,	Report of Bureau of States-General of Holland favourable to course pursued by Dutch Government. Views of the minority ..	114
163	" ..	51	2,	Russian Minister's course shaped by that favoured by the French ..	114
164	To Lord Vivian ..	61	4,	Refers to No. .. Sir W. White informed by telegraph of substance of ..	115
165	To Sir W. White ..	Telegraphic	4,	Repeats No. .. Porte to be induced to take part in Commission ..	115
166	Baron Solvyns ..	..	4,	Alternative proposals of Dutch Government calculated to remove difficulties as to the participation of Holland in Brussels Act ..	115
167	To Lord Vivian ..	265	5,	Transmits copy of No. 153. British Delegates to receive any proposal to extend new Tariff to whole Congo Basin <i>ad referendum</i> ..	117
168	" ..	267	5,	Refers to No. 93. Incloses copy of No. 129 ..	117
169	" ..	268	5,	Transmits copy of No. 155 ..	118
170	" ..	269	5,	Refers to No. 151. Decisions of Commission should be unanimous ..	118
171	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	24	5,	Refers to No. .. Transmits copies of Nos. 139 and 143 ..	118
172	Lord Vivian ..	265	5,	Incloses Nos. 176 and 177 ..	118
173	Aborigines Protection Society ..	..	5,	Memorials urging adoption of Brussels Act ..	119
174	British Delegates ..	1	6,	Refers to No. 167. Commission expect to deliberate on whole extent of Congo Basin ..	121
175	Baron Marschall to Baron von Saurma ..	..	1,	German instructions to their Representative at the Hague, on the Dutch persisting in their opposition to the Declaration ..	121
176	British Delegates ..	1	5,	First meeting of Technical Commission. Ministers of all Signatory Powers present, and ex-Plenipotentiaries of Conference to have the right to attend ..	125
177	" ..	2	5,	Proposal for France, Portugal, and Independent State holding territory on West Coast to prepare jointly a Tariff for Congo Basin proper. Questions as to raising fresh import duties on Sultan's frontier ..	126
178	" ..	2	6,	President laid down that Commission was empowered to deal with whole extent of conventional basin. Instructions asked for ..	126
179	To Sir J. Kirk ..	1	7,	Refers to No. 178. No objection to ruling of President ..	127

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

12

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
180	To Sir J. Kirk ..	1	Nov. 7, 1890	Refers to No. 177. As to first point, no instructions can be given until definite proposal is made; as to the second, Her Majesty's Government cannot commit themselves to policy involving levying Customs duty on any land frontier under British protection	127
181	To Imperial British East Africa Company ..	..	7,	Refers to No. 153. Suggestions will receive full consideration if Commission affords opportunity	127
182	British Delegates ..	3	7,	Reports proceedings at this day's sitting of the Technical Commission. Transmits list of Delegates	127
183	Lord Vivian ..	266	7,	Reception of the Dutch alternative proposals by the Powers, also proposal contained in No. 177	130
184	British Delegates ..	4	7,	Report of proceedings at Technical Commission. Discussion of proposal contained in No. 177	130
185	Sir W. White ..	Telegraphic	9,	Refers to No. 165. Ottoman Minister at Brussels to act as Delegate	132
186	To Lord Vivian ..	62	10,	Refers to No. 184. Board of Trade are being consulted as to separate Tariffs on East and West Coast	132
187	To Board of Trade ..	..	10,	Incloses Nos. 183 and 184. Asks for views of Board of Trade on proposal for separate Tariffs for East and West Coast	132
188	Sir George Petre ..	253	6,	Portuguese Government decline to support proposals of Netherlands Government that Congo State should be subsidized by all the Signatory Powers	132
189	Lord Vivian ..	268	8,	Belgian Government aware of unusual proceedings of Netherlands Government in communicating directly with Powers. Inexpediency of reopening question of providing resources by increasing spirit duties of Congo State	133
190	" "	269	8,	French Government objects to United States being invited to secure adhesion of Liberia to Brussels Act	133
191	" " Delegates ..	271	9,	Transmits No. 192	134
192	British Delegates ..	5	8,	Transmits copy of <i>procès-verbal</i> of opening sitting of Technical Commission, and copy of statistical table, comparing proposed Tariff for Congo Basin with Tariffs existing in other African States	134
193	To Lord Vivian ..	63	11,	On understanding that differential treatment shall be excluded, Her Majesty's Government agrees to separate Tariffs for East and West Coasts	154
194	" "	275	11,	To convey his Lordship's thanks to M. Banning for his paper on Origin and Acts of Brussels Conference. Refers to No.	154
195	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	25	11,	Refers to No. 171. Transmits copies of Nos. 139 and 166, and to Lord Vivian No. 262	154
196	To Baron Solvyns ..	..	11,	Acknowledges receipt of No. 166	154
197	To Aborigines Protection Society ..	..	11,	Acknowledges receipt of No. 173	154
198	British Delegates ..	3	12,	Meeting postponed	155
199	To Lord Vivian ..	278	12,	Refers to No. 261 B. Transmits copy of No. 166. Inquires whether reply to the note shall be sent through Belgian Government, or whether proposals shall be dealt with by Commission	155
200	To British Delegates..	2	12,	Incloses views of Board of Trade. Concurrence of Her Majesty's Government therewith. Proposal to separate the Tariffs to be supported	155
200A	Board of Trade ..	..	12,	Congo Tariff. Observations on	155*
200B	Sir J. Kirk ..	5	14,	Ditto. French insist on autonomy of each State. Proposal of Sub-Committees	155*
201	Sir W. White ..	24	9,	Refers to No. 165. Ottoman Minister at Brussels to represent Sublime Porte at Technical Commission	155

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
202	Sir H. Rumbold ..	7 Telegraphic	Nov. 14, 1890	Suggestion of M. Hartzen for solving Congo Import duties question, by considering Netherlands counter-proposals after the termination of Technical Commission ..	156
203	To Sir J. Kirk ..	3 Telegraphic	14,	Refers to his telegram No. 5. Acceptance of principle of Sub-Committees authorized ..	156
204	Lord Vivian ..	272	14,	Incloses No. 207 ..	157
205	" ..	273	14,	French demands as to Tariffs for East and West Coasts. Explanation by M. Bourée ..	157
206	" ..	274	14,	Wishes of Netherlands Government as to mode of dealing with their proposals for indemnifying the Congo State ..	158
207	British Delegates ..	6	14,	Account of meeting of day before of Congo Tariff Commission ..	159
208	To Lord Vivian ..	64 Telegraphic	15,	Repeats Nos. 202 and 209 ..	161
209	Sir H. Rumbold ..	Telegraphic	15,	Would support proposal, but considers it one which should be made by President of Conference ..	161
210	British Delegates ..	4 Telegraphic	16,	Do Her Majesty's Government approve the proposal that the separate Tariffs for the East and West zones should be discussed by Sub-Committees ..	161
211	Sir H. Rumbold ..	52	14,	Report of conversation with M. Hartzen with regard to attitude assumed by Holland ..	162
212	Lord Vivian ..	275	15,	Attitude of French Delegates with regard to the fiscal autonomy of territorial Powers in Congo Basin ..	163
213	" ..	277	16,	Answers No. 208. Baron Lambert ready to act as proposed if Netherlands Government do not object ..	164
214	M. Hartzen to Count Bylandt (communicated Nov. 17)	..	16,	Gives account of what he said to English Minister ..	164
215	Count Bylandt ..	..	17,	Memorandum from Netherlands Government explaining why they do not sign General Act, and calling attention to the proposals which they have made ..	165
216	To Lord Vivian and Sir H. Rumbold ..	65 Telegraphic	17,	Great caution should be exercised in Assembly. A Conference to consider the Dutch proposals ..	165
217	Lord Vivian ..	278	17,	Copy of Inclosure in No. 215 ..	166
218	British Delegates ..	6 Telegraphic	18,	French views with regard to Tariff for Eastern and Western zones ..	166
219	Sir H. Rumbold ..	54	17,	Refers to No. 211. M. de Hartzen's anxiety that Conference to consider Dutch proposals should meet at once ..	167
220	To Sir E. Malet ..	360	19,	Copies of Nos. 211 and 223 ..	168
221	To Lord Vivian ..	283	19,	Copies of Nos. 211, 219, 222, and 223 ..	168
222	Sir H. Rumbold ..	55	18,	Account of interview with M. Hartzen with regard to accuracy of report of conversation in No. 211 ..	168
223	" ..	56	18,	German Minister's desire that his own Government should not know him to be in favour of not pressing the Dutch too hard ..	171
224	" ..	57	19,	Reports, with reference to No. 222, manner in which M. Hartzen had on a previous occasion backed out of what he had said to the German Minister ..	171
225	Lord Vivian ..	279	19,	Incloses Nos. 226 and 227 ..	172
226	British Delegates ..	8	19,	Congo Tariff Conference. Views of France. Memorandum of proceedings ..	172
227	British Delegates ..	9	19,	Refers to No. 226. Tariff for Eastern zone. As to appointment of Sub-Commission for. Memorandum of informal meeting to consider ..	175
228	Sir H. Rumbold ..	58	20,	Slave Trade Conference. Dutch remain contumacious ..	176
229	Lord Vivian ..	62 Telegraphic	21,	Ditto. French agree to Sub-Commission for Eastern zone ..	176
230	British Delegates ..	7 Telegraphic	22,	Ditto, ditto ..	177
231	To Lord Vivian ..	67 Telegraphic	22,	Answers No. 227. Instructions will be sent ..	177

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

xi

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
232	To Lord Vivian ..	284	Nov. 22, 1890	Transmits copy of No. 224 ..	177
233	" " ..	Confidential 285	22,	French attitude. Answers No. 212. Approves ..	177
234	To Sir E. Malet ..	362	22,	Transmits copy of No. 224 ..	178
235	To Sir W. White ..	Confidential 30	22,	Turkish Delegates. Approves No. 201 ..	178
236	To Earl of Lytton ..	10	23,	Tariff for West Congo. Agreement with Germany. To act in concert to persuade France to consent to fixation of. Act accordingly..	178
237	Sir H. Rumbold ..	Telegraphic 59	22,	Conference on Dutch proposals. M. Hartzen would reserve complete liberty of action. Interview with him ..	178
238	Lord Vivian ..	Confidential 280	22,	French commerce on Congo. Complaints of incidents affecting. King of the Belgians prepared to give full satisfaction provided his Tariff of import duties is accepted ..	179
239	" " ..	Confidential 281	22,	France and the Congo duties. Reasons for her changed attitude ..	179
240	" " ..	282	23,	Ditto. Compromise suggested by Portuguese Minister ..	181
241	" " ..	283	23,	Transmits Nos. 242 and 243 ..	181
242	British Delegates ..	10	23,	France and the Congo duties. French refusal to submit Tariff for French Congo to Commission. Incloses M. Bourée's declaration and Memorandum of Commission ..	182
243	" " ..	11	23,	Tariff for Eastern zone. First sitting of Sub-Commission ..	185
244	Earl of Lytton ..	11	24,	Tariff for West Congo. Refers to No. 236. Interview with Count Münster ..	185
245	To Earl of Lytton (also to Lord Vivian)	217	24,	Transmits copy of No. 264 ..	186
246	To Lord Vivian ..	286	24,	Tariff for Eastern zone. Acknowledges No. 227. Terms of Memorandum not accepted by Her Majesty's Government ..	186
247	To Count de Bylandt ..	..	24,	Attitude of Netherlands Government. Acknowledges No. 215 ..	187
248	Lord Vivian ..	284	25,	Transmits Nos. 249, 250..	187
249	British Delegates ..	12	25,	Transmits copies of <i>procès-verbaux</i> of sittings of Commission held on the 6th, 13th, and 18th November ..	187
250	" " ..	13	25,	No. 246. Memorandum in 227. Count Alvensleben has no instructions. Italian Government accept without reserve ..	207
251	Earl of Lytton ..	12	26,	No. 244. Western Congo Basin. Conversation with M. Ribot. Reports ..	207
252	To Lord Vivian ..	Telegraphic 290	26,	Minimum Tariff for Western zone. Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris instructed to urge French Government to consent to fixation of. Reasons for this course ..	207
253	To Sir J. Kirk ..	3	26,	No. 207. Approves action ..	208
254	To Earl of Lytton ..	12	27,	No. 252. Instructions in may be considered as addressed to Lord Lytton ..	208
255	" " ..	Telegraphic 223	27,	Minimum Tariff for Western zone. Instructions to urge French Government to consent to fixation of ..	208
256	Parliamentary question (Mr. Sydney Buxton)	..	27,	As to present position of affairs relative to enforcement of Brussels General Act, and as to effect of attitude of Holland ..	209
257	Sir E. Malet ..	89	28,	Refers to No. 264. Congo States' right to levy dues. German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs entirely acquiesces in views expressed on. Ambassador at Paris instructed to act in concert with Her Majesty's Ambassador ..	209
258	To Earl of Lytton (also to Sir E. Malet No. 367, and to Lord Vivian No. 291)	224	28,	Transmits copy of No. 237 ..	209
259	To Sir E. Malet ..	368	28,	Transmits copy of No. 250 ..	209

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
260	Earl of Lytton ..	164	Nov. 26, 1890	No. 236. Interview with M. Ribot. Attitude of France. Suggestion of Lord Vivian's for solving difficulty ..	210
261	" ..	165	26,	No. 260. Further interview with M. Ribot on the relations between French Plenipotentiaries at Conference and the French Government ..	211
262	" ..	166 Confidential	26,	No. 261. Information from Belgian Legation accounting for present attitude of French Government ..	211
263	Lord Vivian ..	285	28,	Inclosing Memorandum by Sir John Kirk, suggesting way of meeting German objections to Customs Tariff for East Coast not fixing a minimum limit, &c. ..	212
264	To Sir E. Malet ..	363	29,	Attitude of Netherlands Government. Right of Congo State to levy duties. Examination of. Interpretation removing difficulties ..	213
265	Sir E. Malet ..	141	27,	No. 264. Acknowledges. Incloses copy of note addressed to Baron Marschall ..	215
266	Sir H. Rumbold ..	61	27,	Attitude of Holland ..	216
267	Lord Vivian ..	286	28,	No. 260. Had thought no more of suggestion ..	216
268	Mr. Gosselin ..	287	30,	Interview with Baron Lambermont. Congo Government expect to learn to-day modifications desired by French Government with regard to export duties. Proposed to commence direct negotiations with Paris ..	217
269	" ..	288	Dec. 2,	No. 268. Congo Government not yet learnt French demands. As to general meeting of the Société du Haut Congo ..	217
270	Earl of Lytton ..	13 Telegraphic	3,	Minimum Tariff for Western Congo. Interview with M. Ribot respecting ..	218
271	" ..	14 Telegraphic	4,	Ditto. Language of M. Ribot towards German and Belgian Representatives ..	218
272	To Sir E. Malet ..	113 Telegraphic	4,	Congo duties. Proposes that German and British Ambassadors at Paris should agree to Tariff being settled immediately by Western Powers "de Cabinet à Cabinet" ..	218
273	Earl of Lytton ..	169	3,	No. 255. Fixation of Minimum Tariff. Interview with M. Ribot pressing. France cannot agree to ..	218
274	Parliamentary Question (Mr. Sidney Buxton) ..	..	5,	As to attitude of Holland, and steps taken by Her Majesty's Government regarding ..	220
275	Mr. Gosselin ..	65 Telegraphic	5,	Baron Lambermont already informed that German Government do not object to immediate settlement of Tariff of Western zone by direct negotiations between the three Powers concerned ..	220
276	To Sir E. Malet ..	375	5,	No. 264. Right of Congo State to levy duties. German Government entirely agree ..	221
277	British Delegates ..	14	5,	No. 249. Transmits copies of <i>procès-verbal</i> of sitting of the 22nd November ..	221
278	Mr. Gosselin ..	289 Very Conf.	5,	Interview with Baron Lambermont. Still ignorant of French demands. Modifications of export duties and licences King willing to grant ..	224
279	Nil.	..	..	..	..
280	Society of Friends ..	..	5,	Transmits Memorial of Executive Committee, urging modifications to meet desires of Netherlands Government ..	225
281	British Delegates ..	15	6,	Probability of satisfying French Government. Interview with Baron Lambermont ..	226
282	Sir E. Malet ..	145 Confidential	6,	No. 272. Baron Marschall agrees. His ideas as to M. Ribot's views ..	227
283	Sir H. Rumbold ..	68 Confidential	7,	Offer of Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar to speak to Queen Emma. Offer not accepted by Baron Saurma ..	227
284	" ..	.. Telegraphic	8,	M. Hartzen has informed German Representative that he is prepared to give way if they could receive replies to their counter-proposals ..	228
285	To Earl of Lytton ..	292	8,	No. 273. Approves language. Her Majesty's Government had never expressed approval of Minimum Tariff in principle ..	228

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
286	Sir H. Rumbold ..	64 Very Conf.	Dec. 8, 1890	Netherlands Government prepared to give way if they could obtain replies to their counter-proposals ..	228
287	To Lord Vivian ..	70 Telegraphic	9,	No. 284. Repeats. Is at liberty to send in negative reply to counter-proposals. Her Majesty's Government aware that it is impracticable to reopen question of spirits ..	229
288	Lord Vivian ..	66 Telegraphic	9,	No. 287. Communicated to Baron Lambertmont. Other Powers will be at once requested to forward replies ..	229
289	To Earl of Lytton (also to Sir E. Malet)	334	9,	Transmits copy of No. 278 ..	229
290	Lord Vivian ..	67 Telegraphic	10,	No. 288. Hopes British and German Representatives and other Powers will urge immediate replies ..	230
291	" ..	68 Telegraphic	10,	No. 288. As to explaining real reason for urgency. Baron Lambertmont attaches special importance to Lord Lytton's support	230
292	To Earl of Lytton (also to other Ambassadors and Ministers Signatories of Berlin Act)	16 Telegraphic	10,	Urge Minister for Foreign Affairs to send immediate reply to Dutch counter-proposals	230
293	To Sir E. Malet ..	116 Telegraphic	10,	No. 292. Urge Minister for Foreign Affairs to support representations made by Her Majesty's Government on the subject ..	231
294	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	30	10,	Interview with Count Bylandt. His language different to that of M. Hartsen ..	231
295	Sir H. Rumbold ..	65	10,	Interview with M. Hartsen. Disposition conciliatory ..	231
296	Earl of Lytton ..	15 Telegraphic	11,	Western Congo Tariff. Agreement arrived at between M. Ribot and Belgian Minister ..	232
297	" ..	17 Telegraphic	11,	Dutch Government already informed of French rejection of their counter-proposals ..	232
298	Sir E. Malet ..	91 Telegraphic	11,	No. 293. Baron Marschall will declare rejection of Dutch counter-proposals ..	232
299	Sir A. Paget ..	Telegraphic	11,	Count Kálnoky unable to give reply at once. Hopes to send instructions in accordance with Her Majesty's Government's wishes. Public feeling in Holland against signing the Act ..	232
300	Lord Vivian ..	69 Telegraphic	11,	French proposals for common Tariff for Western zone. Government of Congo State concur generally ..	233
300*	Mr. MacDonell ..	Telegraphic	11,	Danish Government has already made known their refusal to Dutch proposals ..	233
300†	British Delegates ..	14	11,	Tariff for Eastern zone. Submits new draft Agreement ..	233
301	Lord Vivian ..	70 Telegraphic	12,	No. 287. Has addressed a note to Prince Chimay in accordance with instructions ..	233*
302	Sir W. White ..	Secret Telegraphic	12,	No. 292. Porte wishes to gain time. Proposes to make urgent representations to Grand Vizier ..	234
303	Sir R. Morier ..	Telegraphic	12,	No. 292. Instructions of Russian Minister at the Hague ..	234
304	Sir A. Paget ..	Telegraphic	12,	No. 299. Count Kálnoky has instructed Austro-Hungarian Minister to act in concert with German and English colleagues ..	234
305	Sir J. Pauncefote ..	Telegraphic	12,	No. 292. United States' Government refuse Dutch proposals. Their views as to independent territorial Tariff ..	234
306	Lord Vivian ..	71 Telegraphic	12,	No. 300. Franco-Belgian Agreement as to Tariff for West Coast. Some objections of the King. General Agreement of Belgium notified to France ..	235
307	Sir H. Rumbold ..	66 Very Conf.	12,	No. 294. Interview of German Minister with M. Hartsen. Belgian Government endeavouring to back out of conciliatory assurances ..	235
308	Lord Vivian ..	290	12,	No. 287. Transmits copy of note to Prince Chimay refusing Dutch counter-proposals ..	236
309	Mr. Gough ..	Telegraphic	13,	Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs sent immediate reply refusing Dutch proposals ..	236

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
310	Lord Vivian ..	72 Telegraphic	Dec. 13, 1890	Italy rejected Dutch proposals. Other Powers promised to follow suit. If Netherlands Government yield, opposition will not take advantage ..	237
311	British Delegates ..	8 Telegraphic	13,	Draft Import Tariff for Eastern zone. Asks for instructions. Is it approved?..	237
312	Sir H. Rumbold ..	Telegraphic	13,	Learns from Baron Mackay that Government are really about to give way ..	237
313	To Lord Vivian ..	77 Telegraphic	13,	Suggest that Dutch Government have received sufficient number of unfavourable replies to show impossibility of their proposals being accepted, and that they should accordingly sign the Act ..	238
314	" ..	78 Telegraphic	13,	No. 311. Draft Import Tariff approved. Authority asked for given ..	238
315	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	Telegraphic	13,	Press Russian colleague to send refusal of Dutch proposals ..	238
316	To Earl of Lytton ..	18 Telegraphic	13,	Ask for French Ambassador to Porte to be instructed to support Sir W. White's action.	238
317	To Sir E. Malet ..	117 Telegraphic	13,	Ask German Government to instruct their Ambassador to Porte to support Sir W. White ..	238
318	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	31	13,	No. 295. Approves language. Reply of Her Majesty's Government to M. Hartsen already communicated to Belgian Government ..	239
319	Lord Vivian ..	73 Telegraphic	13,	No. 313. Further rejections of Dutch proposals received ..	239
320	To Society of Friends ..	92	13,	No. 280. Acknowledges ..	239
321	Sir E. Malet ..	92 Telegraphic	14,	No. 317. Instructions already sent ..	239
322	Sir W. White ..	Telegraphic	14,	Nos. 292 and 302. Dutch proposals declined by Porte ..	239
323	British Delegates ..	17	13,	United States consent to waive claims if assured of most-favoured-nation treatment. Suggests no Tariff system to come into operation till this confirmed by United States' Senate ..	240
324	Lord Vivian ..	293	14,	All Powers except Russia have rejected Dutch proposals ..	241
325	" ..	294	14,	Agreements arrived at as to Eastern and Western zones' Tariff. Proposed that President of Commission should arrange for communicating them to Technical Commission ..	241
326	" ..	295 Confidential	14,	No. 312. Has communicated to Baron Lambertmont. Is he authorized to urge Netherlands Government in the name of Her Majesty's Government to adhere to Brussels Acts? ..	242
327	Sir H. Rumbold ..	67 Secret	13,	Baron Mackay admits that Dutch Government are prepared to yield if officially informed that their counter-proposals are rejected, and if asked to reconsider decision ..	242
328	Earl of Lytton ..	18 Telegraphic	15,	No. 316. Instructions sent as desired ..	243
329	Board of Trade ..	..	15,	Draft Tariff for import duties for Eastern zone. Can see no objection to..	243
330	To Lord Vivian ..	81 Telegraphic	15,	No 326. Concurs ..	244
331	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	Telegraphic	15,	Rejection of Dutch proposals signified by all Powers except Russia ..	244
332	Marquis of Dufferin ..	14	12,	No. 292. Italian Government rejects Dutch proposals ..	244
333	Lord Vivian ..	74 Telegraphic	16,	Tariff for Western zone. Agreement. Communication of to the Commission may give rise to difficulties. Should the British Delegates insist on communicating? May Delegates accept American Declaration? (see No. 323) ..	245
334	Sir H. Rumbold ..	Telegraphic	16,	No. 315. Russian Minister has requested his Government accordingly ..	245
335	To Lord Vivian ..	82 Telegraphic	16,	Her Majesty's Government agree that President should communicate Tariff arrangements to Commission ..	245

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
336	Sir H. Rumbold ..	68	Dec. 16, 1890	No. 315. Amplifies No. 334 ..	245
337	" " ..	69	16,	Second Chamber appear to be in favour of leaving free hand to Government..	246
338	British Delegates ..	9	17,	No. 314. Draft Tariff, Eastern zone. German colleagues authorized to accept ..	246
339	Earl of Lytton ..	19	17,	Franco-Belgian Agreement as to Congo export duties upset. Common Tariff for Western zone completely settled by Portugal's acceptance ..	246
340	To Lord Vivian ..	84	17,	American Declaration, pure and simple, to be accepted ..	247
341	" " ..	85	17,	No. 333. Her Majesty's Government will not insist if other Powers do not ..	247
342	" " ..	86	17,	No. 339. Belgian Government would commit serious error in raising unexpected difficulties ..	247
343	Lord Vivian ..	75	17,	No. 341. French Government consent to communication of Tariff to Commission ..	247
344	To British Delegates ..	4	17,	No. 281. Language approved ..	248
345	British Delegates ..	18	17,	No. 277. Incloses amendment of <i>procès-verbal</i> of sitting of the 22nd November ..	248
346	Lord Vivian ..	76	18,	Congo export duties. Explanation of difficulty between France and Belgium respecting ..	248
347	" " ..	77	18,	No. 346. Origin of difficulty may be prompted by pecuniary considerations ..	249
348	" " ..	78	18,	His Majesty's version of the difficulty ..	249
349	" " ..	79	18,	Russian rejection of Dutch proposals received. Note addressed to Dutch Government, conveying all answers of the Governments, and expressing hopes that Dutch would sign Acts ..	249
350	To Lord Vivian ..	312	18,	No. 308. Approves ..	250
351	Lord Vivian ..	296	18,	No. 349. Incloses copy of note addressed to Dutch Government by Prince de Chimay ..	250
352	British Delegates ..	10	19,	No. 338. Draft Tariff, Eastern zone. Italian Government have accepted ..	251
353	" " ..	19	19,	Incloses draft Tariff, Eastern zone. Agreed upon by three Powers interested. Can it be signed? ..	251
354	Lord Vivian ..	297	19,	Interview with the King. Does not appear likely to give way ..	252
355	Sir H. Rumbold ..	70	19,	Quotation from "Handelsblad" ..	253
356	Lord Vivian ..	80	20,	Last concession of the King. Fears little prospect of favourable issue, and that King is actuated by pecuniary motives ..	253
357	To Sir J. Kirk ..	4	20,	No. 353. Authorized to sign ..	253
358	British Delegates ..	20	21,	How the negotiations stand. Enlarges on the question still in dispute between France and Congo State ..	253
359	Sir H. Rumbold ..	71	21,	Interview with Baron Mackay, who was much pleased with the Belgian note ..	255
360	To Lord Vivian ..	88	22,	No. 356. Press on Belgian Government odium of causing failure of Brussels Act ..	255
361	To Earl of Lytton ..	23	22,	Press on French Government odium of causing failure of Brussels Act ..	256
362	Lord Vivian ..	81	22,	No. 360. Franco-Belgian difficulty. Fresh proposals expected ..	256
363	British Delegates ..	21	22,	Proceedings of Commission, December 22nd. Adjournment <i>sine die</i> ..	256
364	Earl of Lytton ..	20	23,	No. 361. France accepts Belgian proposals ..	257
365	British Delegates ..	22	22,	Transmits copies of Tariff Agreement for Eastern zone, and of note to the President ..	257
366	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	33	24,	No. 327. Approves language ..	258
367	Mr. Greene ..	Confidential	25,	Dutch Government gives in as to Congo import duties ..	258
368	Lord Vivian ..	82	26,	No. 369. Dutch Government resolved to yield ..	258
369	" " ..	299	25,	Settlement of Franco-Belgian difficulty not yet confirmed. Principle accepted by both sides ..	259
370	Sir R. Morier ..	5	25,	No. 292. Interview with M. de Giers. Account of part played by Russia ..	259

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
371	Lord Vivian ..	300	28,	Uneasiness at the Franco-Belgian difficulty and the Dutch attitude ..	260
372	Mr. Greene ..	Confidential Telegraphic	29,	Government have deferred sending their answer to Brussels for a few days ..	260
373	" ..	72 Very Conf.	29,	Note has been drafted by Cabinet and approved, announcing their intention to sign Brussels Acts ..	260
374	Lord Vivian ..	83	30,	Netherlands Minister announces he has full powers to sign General Act ..	261
375	To Sir H. Rumbold ..	Telegraphic 34	31,	No. 359. Approves action ..	262

CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting the Conference relating to
Slave Trade held at Brussels: 1889-90.

PART III.

No. 1.

*The British Plenipotentiaries at the Slave Trade Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received July 1.)*

(No. 51. Slave Trade Conference.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, July 1, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 55 of the 30th ultimo, it has been decided by the Conference that the General Act and the Declaration could not be signed separately, inasmuch as the Congo State, whose participation cannot be dispensed with, has positively refused to undertake the obligations which the General Act imposes on her unless the Powers unite in guaranteeing to her the fresh resources she requires.

The Declaration cannot take effect without the signature of Holland, and it is hoped to thus put moral pressure on her to sign it.

In the event of our being able to induce the Conference to allow Holland to sign the General Act alone, leaving Protocol of Declaration open to her, would your Lordship authorize us to sign the Declaration? But your Lordship's decision should also be taken on the alternative proposal now before you, as I can scarcely hope that Conference will agree to any other.

No. 2.

*The British Plenipotentiaries at the Slave Trade Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received July 1.)*

(No. 52. Slave Trade Conference.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, July 1, 1890.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 51, the Conference will not accept the motion for adjournment, and the King will not accept the proposal suggested in the last paragraph of my immediately preceding telegram.

The fate of the Conference depends on your Lordship's decision on the French proposal, as the other Powers will not sign without England.

No. 3.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.(No. 56. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.)*Foreign Office, July 1, 1890, 6.45 P.M.*

YOU are authorized to sign General Act and Declaration; but in doing so you will place on record following statement:—

“The proceedings of the Conference having established that the impost authorized by the financial declaration is intended purely for the discharge of the expenditure imposed for the purpose of preventing the Slave Trade by the General Act, the Government of Her Majesty the Queen, in view of the great interests at stake, and taking note of the clause in the Declaration of the 21st June which provides that the conditions of the Tariff are to be fixed by a negotiation to be immediately opened after the signature of the General Act, are unwilling to separate themselves from the body of the Powers, and have therefore authorized as to sign the General Act and Declaration.

“But we are instructed to record our adhesion to the opinions expressed by the Portuguese, Russian, and French Plenipotentiaries in the sitting of the 30th June to the effect that there can be no question of the Act coming into force without the previous assent of all the Powers Signatories of the Berlin Act, and to state that it is on this understanding only that we are authorized to sign under circumstances which are unusual and were not foreseen when the Conference met.”

No. 4.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.(No. 188. Africa.)
My Lord,*Foreign Office, July 1, 1890.*

I HAVE to state, for the information of your Lordship and Sir John Kirk, that I approve the amended draft of Article VII of the proposed Slave Trade Treaty with Spain, in which you have omitted the clause defining the proofs which, in case of the acquittal of a prize, would exempt the captor from responsibility for demurrage, and of which a copy was inclosed in your Lordship's despatch No. 175 of the 18th instant.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 5.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.(No. 195. Africa.)
My Lord,*Foreign Office, July 1, 1890.*

WITH reference to your despatch No. 187, Slave Trade Conference, of the 24th ultimo, I have to state to your Lordship that I entirely concur in the views expressed by your German and Italian colleagues as to the inexpediency of the proposed publication and distribution of the notes taken by the Secretariat of the discussions of the Slave Trade Conference when sitting in Commission.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 6.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.(No. 189. Africa.)
My Lord,*Foreign Office, July 2, 1890.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 178 of the 19th ultimo, I have to inform your Lordship and Sir J. Kirk that I approve your statements at the plenary meeting of the Conference of that day's date, of which copies were therein inclosed, relative to the questions:—

1. Of the export of arms and ammunition from Madagascar and the Comoro Islands, Chapter I, Article VIII.

2. Of the establishment of Consular Courts in the maritime zone under Articles XLIX and L.

3. Of the prevention of the export of spirits from British South African Colonies into the zone with reference to Article XCIV, Chapter VI.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 7.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 190. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, July 2, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 191 of the 24th ultimo, I have to state that I approve the declaration made by your Lordship and Sir J. Kirk, at a plenary session of the Conference, in reply to the declaration of the Portuguese Plenipotentiary, respecting the transit of arms clause.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 8.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 191. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, July 2, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 187 of the 26th ultimo, relative to the Slave Trade carried on in the case of slaves being represented as domestic servants, I transmit herewith, for the information of your Lordship, copy of a further despatch from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople,* inclosing copy of a note which his Excellency had addressed to the Porte on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 9.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 265. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 2, 1890.

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch No. 80, Africa, of the 25th ultimo, I have to state that I approve the note which your Excellency has addressed to the German Government in regard to their desire to adhere to the Slave Trade Treaties concluded between Her Majesty's Government and certain Mussulman States, and of which copy was therein inclosed.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 10.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Mr. Fane.

(No. 14. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 2, 1890.

I HAVE to inform you that I approve the note which Sir W. White addressed to Saïd Pasha, calling attention to the Slave Trade being carried on by persons representing the slaves to be domestic servants accompanying their masters and mistresses, and of which copy was inclosed in his Excellency's despatch No. 10, Africa, of the 16th instant.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

* See Part II, No. 444.

No. 11.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 3.)

(No. 18. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, July 2, 1890.

I LEARN from a confidential and perfectly trustworthy source that it is asserted at the Foreign Office here that, in agreeing to sign the Declaration relative to the import duties to be levied in the Congo State, Baron de Gericke acted entirely on his own responsibility. It seems difficult, nevertheless, to believe that so experienced a Diplomatist as the Dutch Minister at Brussels can have acted as he did without having good reason to think that he was correctly interpreting the intentions of his Government, and if so, the puzzling question remains of what can at the eleventh hour have caused that Government so entirely to disavow their Representative.

However this may be, the fact none the less subsists, and cannot, in my humble opinion, be made too public, that the Dutch Government have, in dealing with this question, made themselves entirely subservient to the interests of a third or fourth rate Company engaged in a trade, the elements and conditions of which, will scarcely admit of close inspection. It is the more essential to bear this fact in mind as the Dutch Government give out that they are bound to safeguard the national trade which is deeply involved in the affair, the truth being, I am assured, that the exports to Africa of the Rotterdam Company, who alone are in question, consist, in addition to the vile spirits produced in this country, almost entirely of inferior goods of German manufacture. I may further add that, with the exception of the utterances of the leading Rotterdam paper, which, of course, advocates the cause of the Company, there are no signs whatever of any general interest in the question.

Nor is it, I believe, true, as asserted here, that the Dutch Company is exclusively interested in the question, inasmuch as a Belgian Company having its seat at Brussels, and called the "Magasins du Congo," besides another Company trading from Antwerp, and a German Company seated at Hamburg, all have dealings with the Congo. As for the Rotterdam Company itself, some idea of its importance may be gathered from the fact that the entire capital invested in it does not exceed 2,000,000 fl. It would, indeed, probably not have been difficult at one time for the Government of the Congo to buy up the entire concern. At any rate, it seems intolerable that the so-called interests of this wretched Rotterdam undertaking should be allowed to stand in the way of the great work on which the entire civilized world have been engaged at Brussels.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 12.

Edinburgh Total Abstinence Society to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 3.)

Committee Rooms, 52, Nicolson Street, Edinburgh,

July 2, 1890.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for your Lordship's perusal, a copy of a Resolution adopted at our temperance meeting last night, in which the efforts of your Government on behalf of African progress and civilization were frankly owned. A copy of the Resolution was also sent to the "Scotsman," the "Scottish Leader," and the "Glasgow Herald."

With sentiments of esteem, I remain, &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM TODD, *Secretary.*

Inclosure in No. 12.

Resolution.

AT the usual weekly meeting of the Edinburgh Total Abstinence Society, held in the Temperance Hall, Nicholson Street, William Muir, Esq., President, in the Chair, the following Resolution was proposed by Mr. Andrew Bennet, District Agent of the

Scottish Permissive Bill Association, and seconded by Mr. William Todd, Secretary of the Edinburgh Total Abstinence Society, and unanimously affirmed:

"That this meeting heartily thanks Her Majesty's Government for the honourable and disinterested exertions of the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain at the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference, and, particularly, in their efforts to save the uncontaminated native African races from the "curse of civilization"—the use of intoxicating liquors—and earnestly hope that the same principles of righteous prohibition government will be applied through the power being given to this people, by Legislative enactment, to save themselves from the temptations which the richer class of the community will not tolerate near their dwellings. Likewise, that a copy of this Resolution be communicated by the Secretary to Lord Salisbury, and also sent to the press."

No. 13.

Question asked in the House of Commons, July 3, 1890.

Sir George Campbell,—To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if he can now say whether the Representatives of the British Government have agreed to make the Anti-Slavery Conference an occasion for imposing heavy duties on merchandize in the free trade area of Africa, and a light or almost nominal duty on spirits:

And whether Parliament will be consulted before advantage is taken of a Conference on another subject to put an end to free trade in ordinary merchandize while spirits are admitted on very easy terms.

Answer.

Her Majesty's Government have agreed to import duties being levied purely for the discharge of the expenditure imposed by the General Act for the prevention of the Slave Trade. The conditions of the tariff are to be fixed by a negotiation to be opened immediately after the signature of the General Act.

No. 14.

Question asked in the House of Commons, July 3, 1890.

Mr. Sydney Buxton,—To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the General Act of the Anti-Slavery Conference has been actually signed by all the Powers represented at the Conference, with the exception of Turkey and Holland;

Whether Turkey assents to the Act, and will sign subsequently;

Whether it is true that Holland refuses to sign, and if so, on what grounds; and

Whether her refusal will prevent the ratification of the General Act.

Answer.

The General Act has been signed by all the Powers except Turkey and Holland.

The Turkish Plenipotentiary has assented to the Act, and will sign as soon as the necessary authority is received from Constantinople.

The Dutch Plenipotentiary assented to the General Act, but not to the Declaration attached to it authorizing the levy of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo. He did not therefore sign.

The time allowed for the exchange of ratifications is twelve months. It may be hoped that before that time has expired the assent of Holland will have been obtained.

No. 15.

The British Plenipotentiaries at the Slave Trade Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received July 4.)

(No. 204. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 2, 1890.

WE have the honour to report that the General Act of the Conference of Brussels, together with the Declaration of the 21st June authorizing conditionally the establishment of import duties not exceeding 10 per cent. in the conventional basin of the Congo, were signed to-day by the Plenipotentiaries of all the Contracting Powers, except Turkey, whose Plenipotentiary has not yet received his full powers, and the Netherlands, whose Plenipotentiary claimed to sign the General Act, but refused to sign the Declaration on the ground that it involved a modification of the General Act of Berlin which this Conference was not competent to deal with.

The Protocols of both Acts will remain open for six months to allow the Powers which were unable to sign to-day to do so in the interval, and sufficient time will thus be given for the proposal by the Powers of the necessary legislation to their respective Parliaments before the date of ratification of the Act. The Plenipotentiaries of the United States signed the General Act but not the Declaration, as they are not parties to the Berlin Act, but they signed a separate Agreement with the Independent State of the Congo relinquishing their rights to the free entry of their merchandize into the Congo State under the Declaration of Washington, on the same conditions and within the same limits as those specified in the Declaration of the 21st June, and on the understanding that the United States will receive most-favoured-nation treatment in every respect in all the other States of the conventional basin of the Congo with which they have no Conventions.

We need not repeat the arguments by which the Conference, representing as it does all the Powers parties to the Berlin Act, has maintained its competency to modify it by common consent, nor need we point out that the General Act, to which the Netherlands Plenipotentiary takes no exception and claims to sign, contains stipulations restricting the trade in arms and imposing duties on spirits introduced into the conventional basin of the Congo, which undoubtedly constitute modifications of the Berlin Act.

We have the honour to inclose a copy of the speech and declaration by which we accompanied our announcement to the Conference that we were authorized to sign both Acts, which will be recorded in the official Protocol of the proceedings, clearly laying down the conditions which Her Majesty's Government have attached to our signature of the Acts.

We venture to offer our sincere congratulations to Her Majesty's Government, and particularly to your Lordship, on the conclusion of this great International Act due to your initiative, the success of which has been received by the constant solicitude with which your Lordship has watched over our deliberations and guided our steps.

No human work can be perfect, and ours unavoidably bears the traces of the necessity of reconciling the prejudices and often divergent interests of seventeen different Powers, but we should be wanting in justice to our colleagues in the Conference if we did not testify to their anxious solicitude at all times to make these interests subservient to the higher interests of humanity, to the sacrifices their Governments have made to that end, and to the harmony and conciliatory spirit which have reigned throughout our long deliberations.

The Conference, animated by this spirit and by a sense of the great object it had in view, has, by firmly refusing to discuss questions beyond the limits of its competency, successfully traversed serious difficulties, and, as we hope, has laid the foundations of a great and permanent work which cannot fail to promote the interests of humanity and the welfare of the African races.

The General Act is unfortunately incomplete by the absence of the signature of Holland, but the Powers have left them ample time and every facility to reconsider her decision, and they have every hope she will do so.

We have, &c.
(Signed) **VIVIAN.**
JOHN KIRK.

Inclosure in No. 15.

Speech and Declaration of Lord Vivian.

LORD VIVIAN, after thanking the Conference on his own and on Sir John Kirk's behalf for the courtesy their colleagues had shown in awaiting until to-day the final answer of Her Majesty's Government, and stating that an explanation was due to the assembly as to the reasons which had caused this delay, spoke as follows:—

“Les préoccupations du Gouvernement de la Reine ont été inspirées par deux considérations : la première, de ne pas toucher à la légère à la complète liberté de commerce établie par l'Acte Général de Berlin dans l'intérêt de la civilisation et des populations Africaines afin d'améliorer leur sort et de hâter leur marche vers un meilleur état social aucune autre considération que celle de l'avancement de notre œuvre—la suppression de la Traite—pourrait dans la pensée du Gouvernement de la Reine justifier la moindre modification du principe de la complète liberté commerciale établie par l'Acte de Berlin, et toute modification de ce genre devrait, dans leur vue, être entourée par les plus grandes précautions afin qu'elle ne dépasse pas les strictes limites du but pour lequel les Puissances y ont consenti.

“La seconde préoccupation de notre Gouvernement a été de sauvegarder scrupuleusement le principe qu'un Traité ne saurait être modifié sans le consentement de toutes les Puissances Signataires ; sur ce point les opinions exprimées par plusieurs Plénipotentiaires qui ont pris la parole dans la dernière séance de la Conférence ont eu pour effet de rassurer le Gouvernement de la Reine. Et pour bien rapporter leur opinion sur ces deux points il nous a chargé, en autorisant notre signature des deux Actes, d'y joindre la déclaration suivante :

“Les délibérations de la Conférence ayant établi que la taxe autorisée par la déclaration financière a exclusivement pour but de fournir les moyens de faire face aux dépenses imposées afin d'arrêter la Traite des Nègres par l'Acte Général, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, en vue des grands intérêts en jeu, et tenant compte de la clause figurant dans la Déclaration du 21 Juin, d'après laquelle les conditions du tarif doivent être fixées de commun accord par une négociation à ouvrir immédiatement après la Signature de l'Acte Général, ne veut pas se séparer de l'ensemble des Puissances, et nous a autorisés en conséquence à signer l'Acte Général et la Déclaration.

“Toutefois, nous avons reçu pour instructions de rappeler notre adhésion aux opinions exprimées par les Plénipotentiaires qui ont parlé dans la séance du 30 Juin, à cette fin qu'il ne saurait être question de mettre à exécution la Déclaration du 21 Juin sans le consentement préalable de toutes les Puissances Signataires de l'Acte de Berlin et de constater que ce n'est qu'à cette condition que nous sommes autorisés à signer.

“Messieurs, avant de conclure je me permettrai de faire un solennel et dernier appel à la Puissance qui, seul maintenant, hésite à apposer sa signature aux deux Actes qui forment l'ensemble de l'œuvre de la Conférence. Si, comme nous le pensons, ses hésitations sont inspirées par les mêmes préoccupations que celles qui ont troublé le Gouvernement de la Reine, nous osons espérer—nous osons même attendre, que les mêmes graves considérations qui ont pesées avec nous—surtout celle de ne pas nous séparer de l'ensemble des Puissances au moment de l'achèvement de notre œuvre humanitaire—pourraient aussi avoir du poids auprès d'elle.

“Notre œuvre ne pourra pas être complète sans les Pays-Bas : son Gouvernement a loyalement pris sa part à sa laborieuse construction ; qu'il ne nous abandonne pas au moment de son couronnement, en rendant ainsi stérile tout le fruit de nos longs travaux. Nous saluerons son adhésion avec joie, et nous espérons toujours l'obtenir.”

No. 16.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 4, 3.40 P.M.)

(Slave Trade Conference.)

(Telegraphic.)

Constantinople, July 4, 1890, 3.5 P.M.

I AM informed that the Sultan's Iradé, authorizing the Ottoman Plenipotentiary to sign the General and Final Act, was sent to Porte yesterday.

Repeated to Lord Vivian.

Mr. Gosselin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 206. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 4, 1890.

A DINNER was given at the Palace last evening in celebration of the successful termination of the labours of the Anti-Slave Trade Conference, to which all the Plenipotentiaries and Delegates still here, the Belgian Ministers, and the members of the Congo Administration were invited.

The King, who appeared to be much pleased at the conclusion of this important International Act, personally expressed his thanks for the share taken by each Plenipotentiary in the work and for the sacrifices made by their respective Governments in promoting the objects for which the Conference was summoned.

His Majesty requested me to state that he was especially gratified at the telegrams he had received in the course of the day from Her Majesty the Queen and from your Lordship, congratulating him on the satisfactory issue of this long-pending negotiation.

I have, &c.

(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Mr. Gosselin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 208. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 5, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT told me yesterday that the Turkish Minister had that morning received his full powers enabling him to sign the General Act of the Brussels Conference and the separate Declaration authorizing the imposition of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo.

Carathéodory Effendi stated that the Porte desired him to make a reserve as to Article XXXIV, which stipulates that "the name of each dhow and the indication of her tonnage shall be incrustated and painted in Latin characters on the poop," and to claim the admission of Arabic characters for this purpose.

Baron Lambermont, who does not anticipate any serious difficulty on this head, has proposed that the native dhows should bear these inscriptions in both characters; he hopes that the Turkish Minister will sign the Act and Declaration next week.

I have, &c.

(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Mr. Gosselin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 209. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 6, 1890.

WITH reference to Lord Vivian's and Sir John Kirk's despatch No. 204, Slave Trade Conference, of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to inclose copy of the declaration signed by the Plenipotentiaries of the United States and of the Independent State of the Congo simultaneously with the General Act of the Conference of Brussels, relinquishing conditionally the right of the former Government to the free entry of American merchandize into the Congo State on the same conditions and within the same limits as those specified in the Declaration signed on the same day by the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Act.

The two Governments further undertake to substitute for this provisional declaration a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation, to be concluded on the same lines as the Declaration, and assuring to the flag, commerce, and citizens of the United States in the Congo Territory all the rights accorded to the Powers by the Berlin Act; the ratifications of this Treaty to be exchanged simultaneously with those of the General Act of Brussels.

I would draw your Lordship's attention to the interpretative clause in the present

declaration whereby the United States' Plenipotentiaries state that they understand thereby that American citizens shall enjoy in the countries of the conventional basin of the Congo with which the United States have no special Treaties, the same treatment as that accorded, or to be accorded, to the subjects of the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Act.

I have, &c.
(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure in No. 19.

Déclaration.

LES Soussignés, Plénipotentiaires de la République des États-Unis d'Amérique et de l'État Indépendant du Congo ;

Tenant compte des dispositions de l'Acte Général de ce jour constituant un ensemble de mesures destinées à mettre un terme à la Traite des Nègres sur terre et sur mer et à améliorer les conditions morales et matérielles d'existence des populations indigènes.

Considérant que l'exécution des dispositions prises dans ce but impose à l'État Indépendant du Congo des obligations qui exigent impérieusement, pour y faire face, des ressources correspondantes :

Sont convenus de faire la déclaration suivante :

La République des États-Unis d'Amérique, reconnaissant qu'il est juste et nécessaire de faciliter à l'État Indépendant du Congo l'accomplissement des obligations qu'il a contractées en vertu de l'Acte Général de ce jour, admet, pour ce qui la concerne, que des droits d'entrée soient perçus sur les marchandises importées dans le dit État.

Le tarif de ces droits ne pourra dépasser 10 pour cent de la valeur des marchandises au port d'importation pendant quinze ans à partir de la signature de la présente déclaration, sauf pour les spiritueux, qui sont régis par les dispositions du Chapitre VI de l'Acte Général de ce jour.

Les États-Unis jouiront dans l'État Indépendant du Congo, quant aux droits d'entrée, de tous les avantages accordés à la nation la plus favorisée.

Il a été convenu en outre :

1. Qu'aucun traitement différentiel ni droit de transit ne pourra être établi.
2. Que dans l'application du régime Douanier qui sera introduit l'État du Congo s'attachera à simplifier autant que possible, les formalités et à faciliter les opérations du commerce.

Les deux Gouvernements s'engagent à substituer à la présente déclaration un Traité d'Amitié, de Commerce, et de Navigation conclu sur les bases de cette déclaration et assurant au pavillon, au commerce, et aux citoyens des États-Unis d'Amérique dans les territoires de l'État Indépendant du Congo tous les droits accordés aux Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin ; la présente déclaration est provisoire et ne doit servir que jusqu'à la conclusion définitive de ce Traité.

En signant la présente déclaration les Plénipotentiaires des États-Unis entendent que leur pavillon, leurs intérêts commerciaux et leurs nationaux jouiront dans les pays du bassin conventionnel du Congo avec lesquels ils n'ont pas de Traité spécial, du même traitement que reçoivent ou recevront les nationaux des Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin.

Les ratifications du Traité prévu par la présente déclaration seront échangées en même temps que celles de l'Acte Général de ce jour.

Il est bien entendu que si la déclaration au sujet des droits d'entrée signée aujourd'hui par les Puissances Signataires de l'Acte de Berlin ne devrait pas entrer en vigueur, en ce cas la présente déclaration serait absolument nulle et sans effet.

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires soussignés ont signé la présente déclaration et y ont apposé leurs cachets.

Fait à Bruxelles le 2 Juillet de l'an de grâce 1890.

(Signé)

EDWIN H. TERRELL.
H. S. SANFORD.
EDM. VAN EETVELDE.
A. VAN MALDEGHEM.

No. 20.

Foreign Office to Edinburgh Total Abstinence Society.

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 7, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, inclosing copy of a Resolution adopted by your Society, recognizing the efforts of Her Majesty's Government on behalf of African progress and civilization.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. V. LISTER.

No. 21.

Foreign Office to Liverpool Chamber of Commerce.

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 8, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo, inclosing copies of a Memorial from the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, deprecating the imposition of import or transit duties upon merchandize passing into and through the regions of the Congo until the time named in the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 1885 shall have elapsed.

In reply, I am to state, for the information of your Chamber, that His Majesty the King of the Belgians having declared his inability to carry out the Resolutions of the Brussels Conference in regard to the Slave Trade unless he was allowed to impose import duties, and the Powers having declared that the General Act of the Conference, containing the provisions for the suppression of the Slave Trade, would not be signed by them without the Financial Declaration, Her Majesty's Government have agreed to a modification of the engagements by which such duties were prohibited, on the understanding that the Tariff conditions to be established should form the subject of negotiation.

I am, &c.
(Signed) P. CURRIE.

No. 22.

Mr. Gosselin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 9.)

(No. 210. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 8, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 208, Slave Trade Conference, of the 5th instant, I have the honour to report that, as at present arranged, Carathéodory Effendi will address an official note to Baron Lambertmont, claiming that in view of the fact that Turkish subjects are as a rule unacquainted with Latin characters, the inscriptions on dhows referred to in Article XXXIV of the General Act, should be made in Arabic characters, and that the President, in acknowledging the receipt of this communication will state that as a means of executing the Article, the Powers will be ready to admit of this modification, not of the spirit, but of the letter of the General Act, which will be proposed when the Representatives of all the Signatory Powers meet for the exchange of the ratifications.

The President will at the same time inform the Turkish Government that in their own interests it will be advisable that the inscriptions, whenever practicable, should be in both characters.

Baron Lambertmont tells me that Sir John Kirk, whom he consulted on the matter before he left Brussels, sees no objection to this modification, and that the French and Russian Plenipotentiaries (who, with the British Representatives were chiefly interested in the Maritime Chapter), also concur; he therefore telegraphed yesterday to Berlin, and on receiving the assent of the German Government will act in the manner indicated above.

The Turkish Minister, on receiving the note from the President, will be ready to sign both Acts without any further delay.

I have, &c.
(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 23.

Mr. Gosselin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 9.)

(No. 211.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 8, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose three copies of the text of the General Act of the Conference of Brussels, as submitted by the Editing Committee to the Conference on the 20th ultimo, which forms an Annex to Protocol No. 24 inclosed in Lord Vivian's and Sir John Kirk's dispatch No. 203 of the 1st instant.*

The amendments adopted at the plenary sitting of the 20th ultimo are marked in red ink.

I have, &c.

(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 24.

Mr. Fane to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 12. Africa.)

My Lord,

Therapia, July 4, 1890.

WITH reference to Sir William White's telegram, Confidential, of the 29th May last, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that I am informed that the Sultan's Iradé authorizing the Imperial Ottoman Plenipotentiary to sign the General and the Final Act of the Brussels Conference was sent to the Sublime Porte yesterday.

I have communicated this information to Mr. Gosselin at Brussels.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDMUND FANE.

No. 25.

Mr. Fane to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 11.)

(No. 13. Africa.)

My Lord,

Therapia, July 4, 1890.

I REPORTED in my despatch No. 11 of the 22nd ultimo the steps taken conjointly by the British and German Embassies for prevailing upon the Council of Ministers, which met on Sunday the 22nd ultimo, to send a Mazbata to the Sultan, recommending that the Ottoman Plenipotentiary should be authorized without delay to join his colleagues in signing the General Act of the Brussels Conference for the suppression of the Slave Trade.

The Mazbata was duly agreed upon by the Ministers, and was the same day transmitted by them to the Sultan.

Notwithstanding the incessant efforts made by M. de Radowitz and by me at the Palace as well as at the Porte to procure, as speedily as possible, the Sultan's sanction to the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, it was only yesterday that His Majesty's Iradé was sent to the Porte permitting the dispatch of instructions enabling Carathéodory Effendi to sign the General and Final Act. Information of this having been accomplished did not reach me at Therapia before this morning, when, not feeling certain that the instructions would be communicated by telegraph to Carathéodory Effendi, I sent a telegram announcing the fact of the Iradé's issue both to your Lordship and to Her Majesty's Representative at Brussels. Later in the day I learned that the Ottoman Plenipotentiary had received his authorization by the telegraph, and had already signed the Act.

I understand that His Majesty the Sultan has made a trifling reservation, according to which the register numbers of the small vessels are to be displayed in Arabic as well as in Latin numerals.

I am bound to say that the Porte has acted with every deference to our wishes in furthering the dispatch of this business. I also venture to think that His Majesty the

* Not printed, as it appears appended to Protocol No. 24. (See "Africa No. 8, 1890.")

Sultan has shown his desire on this occasion to be agreeable to Her Majesty's Government.

The question was one in which His Majesty took especial interest, and I was not sanguine that he would come to a decision about it with so little delay.

I cannot too sincerely express my appreciation of the support in this matter which I received from the German Ambassador.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDMUND FANE.

No. 26.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir J. Pauncefoot.

(No. 24.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 11, 1890.

I TRANSMIT herewith, for your information, copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Brussels, inclosing a declaration made by the Plenipotentiaries of the Congo Free State and the United States at the Slave Trade Conference on the occasion of the signature of the General Act.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 27.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 12.)

(No. 40. Africa.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 10, 1890.

M. BEERNAERT, the Prime Minister, laid before the Chamber of Representatives yesterday, a Bill providing for the advance out of the public funds of a loan of 25,000,000 fr. to the Congo State, 5,000,000 fr. of which is to be paid immediately after the sanction of the proposal by Parliament, and the balance in annual instalments of 2,000,000 fr. spread over the succeeding ten years, no interest being paid on the loan during this period.

Six months after the expiration of this term, Belgium is to have the option of taking over the Congo State with all the rights, privileges, and obligations attaching to its sovereignty, the King renouncing all claim to any indemnity for the heavy personal sacrifices he has made.

If at the end of the aforesaid period of ten and a-half years, during which the Congo State undertakes not to contract any fresh loan without the consent of the Belgian Government, Belgium having meanwhile had every opportunity of making herself acquainted with the economical, commercial, and financial position of the Congo State by the examination of its annual Budgets and Customs Returns, without thereby acquiring any right of interfering in its administration, should finally decide not to take over the Congo State, the loan of 25,000,000 fr. must be repaid at the expiration of a further term of ten years, and during this period it will bear interest at the rate of 3½ per cent.

For your Lordship's more complete information respecting this important proposal, I inclose copies of the explanatory statement by which M. Beernaert prefaced its introduction, which quotes the King's will, bequeathing all his sovereign rights over the Congo State to his country at his death, and His Majesty's letter to his Minister on the subject, as well as copies of the proposed Agreement between Belgium and the Congo State.

I am informed that the announcement of this proposal was received without any enthusiasm by the Chamber, but that it will almost certainly be adopted by Parliament, notwithstanding the bitter opposition of the Radical party, which has from the first been strongly hostile to the assumption by Belgium of any responsibility for the Congo State.

That such a proposal, which only a few years ago would have been scouted as preposterous, can be submitted to Parliament, with any chance of success, marks a notable change of public opinion in favour of the King's work in Africa, and this

change has been lately fostered by the struggle for the partition of Africa between the European Powers, by Mr. Stanley's glowing descriptions of the future riches of the Congo State, and by the knowledge of the fresh resources guaranteed to it by the General Act and Declaration of the Brussels Conference to assist it in meeting the cost of the Slave Trade.

On this point I inclose an article from to-day's "Indépendance Belge," the organ of the moderate Liberal party, pointing out that the publication of this arrangement is premature, seeing that Holland has not yet signed the Acts of the Brussels Conference, and that her knowledge of the stipulations of this Agreement will encourage her to refuse to sign the Declaration allowing the Congo State to levy import duties..

In any case, the time given to Belgium to reflect on a step involving such serious and far-reaching consequences, both to the country and its dynasty, which Baron Lambert has well described as one of the most grave and important decisions which Belgium has ever been called on to take, is by no means too long.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 27.

CHAMBRE DES REPRÉSENTANTS.—SÉANCE DU 9 JUILLET, 1890.

Approbation d'une Convention avec l'État Indépendant du Congo.

Exposé des Motifs.

Messieurs,

LE Gouvernement du Roi a l'honneur de soumettre à l'approbation de la Législature la Convention ci-jointe, intervenue entre lui et l'État Indépendant du Congo, et dont l'importance n'a pas besoin d'être signalée.

Avant d'en exposer l'objet, il importe de rappeler les phases successives par lesquelles a passé la grande entreprise poursuivie depuis quinze ans en Afrique par Sa Majesté, avec une persévérance et un succès qui ont attiré l'admiration du monde, ainsi que la part que la Belgique y a prise jusqu'ici.

En 1876, le Roi, cherchant à réaliser une pensée qui le préoccupait longtemps déjà avant son avènement, réunit au Palais de Bruxelles une Conférence Géographique, à laquelle il appela les principaux explorateurs de l'Afrique à prendre part.

Il s'agissait dès lors de donner une impulsion vigoureuse à la reconnaissance des territoires encore inconnus de l'Afrique Centrale et de créer les bases de sa civilisation future.

La fondation de l'Association Internationale Africaine fut le résultat de ce premier effort. Une souscription nationale, organisée dans le pays pour l'appuyer, produisit en quelques mois la somme relativement considérable de 410,000 fr. Ce fut le témoignage manifeste de l'intérêt que la nation prit dès l'origine à cette courageuse initiative.

Pendant six ans, les expéditions se succédèrent, mais par la Côte Orientale la fondation des stations de Karema et de Mpala date de cette époque.

Un grand événement s'était produit dans l'intervalle. A la fin de 1877, Stanley, dont on était sans nouvelles depuis trois ans, avait reparu sur les bords de l'Atlantique, révélant au monde le cours du Congo et les richesses de son immense bassin. Le Roi, frappé de l'importance de ces grandes découvertes, appela à lui l'héroïque explorateur, et le 25 Novembre, 1878, se constituait à Bruxelles le Comité d'Études du Haut-Congo, destiné à remplir à la Côte Occidentale une mission analogue à celle dont l'Association Internationale s'acquittait sur les rivages de l'Océan Indien.

Conduit avec une activité et une vigueur remarquables, le Comité fit des prodiges. De 1879 à 1884, il couvrit de stations les deux rives du fleuve, traça des routes, fit explorer le réseau hydrographique du Congo. Le 3 Décembre, 1881, un premier steamer était lancé, en amont des cataractes, sur le Stanley-Pool et, deux mois plus tard, Léopoldville était fondée. Plus de mille Traités avaient été négociés avec les Chefs indigènes et assuraient au Comité la possession souveraine de vastes régions.

Dès lors, la fusion de l'Association et du Comité s'imposait, et ils firent place à l'Association Internationale du Congo. Devenue une Puissance territoriale considérable, cette institution concentra désormais tous ses efforts sur le Bassin du Congo et y exerça de fait des pouvoirs souverains.

L'Amérique et l'Europe applaudirent à cet événement important. Les États-Unis d'abord, l'Empire d'Allemagne ensuite, reconnurent le pavillon étoilé à l'égal de celui d'une nation amie.

Bientôt un nouvel et grand acte s'accomplit. Le 15 Novembre, 1884, s'ouvrit à Berlin une Conférence convoquée par l'Empereur d'Allemagne, de concert avec le Président de la République Française. Après quatre mois de délibérations, cette assemblée mémorable traça les limites du bassin conventionnel du Congo, fixa la législation économique destinée à le régir et lui concéda le privilège politique de la neutralité. Le Traité du 26 Février, 1885, clôt le premier acte de l'entreprise du Roi.

Jusqu'à cette date, le Gouvernement Belge n'avait pas eu, vis-à-vis d'elle, de position officielle à prendre. Il n'avait certes pas assisté avec indifférence au magnifique épanouissement de l'œuvre et au sympathique accueil fait par les Gouvernements des deux mondes à cette Puissance nouvelle, messagère de paix et de civilisation parmi des races déshéritées; mais il avait laissé au Souverain qui la personnifiait devant l'opinion publique, le soin et l'honneur de conduire lui-même cette vaste conception à bonne fin.

Toutefois, au lendemain de la Conférence de Berlin, la situation était changée.

Comme toutes les Puissances réunies à Berlin, la Belgique avait reconnu le caractère souverain de l'Association Internationale du Congo. Ainsi, le Roi des Belges était de fait le Souverain d'un autre territoire.

La Constitution a prévu la possibilité de cette situation et, conformément à ses dispositions, les Chambres Législatives la réglèrent par une double Déclaration du 28-30 Avril, 1885, qui autorisa à titre personnel, le Roi des Belges à assumer la souveraineté de l'État fondé en Afrique par l'Association Internationale du Congo et qui prit dès ce moment le nom d'État Indépendant du Congo.

La Législature sanctionna à l'unanimité l'Acte Général de Berlin, à la presque unanimité l'union personnelle de la Belgique et de l'État Indépendant.

Le 1^{er} Août de la même année, le Roi notifia à toutes les Puissances sa prise de possession en même temps que les limites et la neutralité du nouvel Empire Africain.

Telle fut la première intervention officielle de la Belgique dans l'œuvre du Congo.

Dans le même temps, les Puissances Maritimes de l'Europe, naguère encore plus ou moins indifférentes aux choses de l'Afrique Centrale, fondaient en différents points d'importants établissements, afin de se ménager, elles aussi, dans le continent noir, des débouchés commerciaux et des champs d'expansion. Ce mouvement est allé toujours en s'accroissant, et le partage de l'Afrique est bien près d'être accompli.

En présence de cette situation nouvelle, une occupation rapide, efficace, des territoires, s'imposait comme expression et sanction du droit.

L'État du Congo, de 1885 à 1890, a réalisé dans cette voie des progrès qui l'ont maintenu au premier rang. Les stations se sont étendues et multipliées, et plusieurs ont pris l'aspect de cités naissantes. La route des cataractes est devenue une voie banale. Le réseau navigable reconnu a été décuplé. Vingt-sept steamers sillonnent les eaux du Pool et du haut-fleuve. Le mouvement commercial a pris une activité imprévue, et c'est à une dizaine de millions que les évaluations les plus circonspectes estiment dès à présent le chiffre annuel des affaires de la Belgique avec le Congo.

Un tel effort a nécessairement exigé de grands sacrifices. Une Colonie naissante ne peut recourir à l'impôt que modérément, et la douane est, pour ainsi dire, son unique recette. Or, l'Acte de Berlin enlevait au Congo cette source de revenus, au moins en ce qui concerne les droits d'entrée.

De là, si grande que fût la munificence Royale, des embarras pour l'État naissant.

L'union entre les deux pays étant strictement personnelle, le Congo devait se suffire à l'aide de ses ressources propres. Mais si la Belgique n'a assumé d'obligations d'aucun genre, elle ne pouvait manquer de témoigner une active sympathie à une entreprise dont on pouvait pressentir le but éloigné.

À deux reprises, elle en a fourni la preuve.

Diverses œuvres d'utilité publique ou de philanthropie, et notamment la Croix-Rouge d'Italie et celles d'Autriche et de Hongrie, avaient trouvé des ressources dans une forme d'emprunt nouvelle, où le prêteur renonce à toucher un intérêt annuel pour

se contenter du remboursement de son capital, suivant des tirages au sort, avec la chance de certaines primes ou tout au moins avec l'intérêt accumulé.

L'État du Congo fit un emprunt de cette nature et demanda pour les titres à émettre l'autorisation de la côte en Belgique.

Cette autorisation, qui n'entraînait pour l'État Belge d'obligations d'aucun genre, fut l'objet de la Loi du 29 Avril, 1887, votée à la Chambre par 86 voix, contre 9 et 7 abstentions, et au Sénat par 44 voix contre 1 et 5 abstentions.

Les titres de l'emprunt ainsi émis sont garantis par un fonds composé de valeurs excellentes, mais bien qu'ailleurs des opérations analogues eussent pleinement réussi, celle-ci n'obtint qu'un médiocre succès, et l'État du Congo n'y trouva point les ressources sur lesquelles il avait cru pouvoir compter.

Dans le même temps, on avait mis activement à l'étude les projets d'établissement d'un chemin de fer de la côte au Stanley-Pool. L'innavigabilité du Congo dans la partie inférieure de son cours constitue jusqu'ici le principal obstacle au développement du trafic, et, dès l'origine, Stanley avait signalé l'impérieuse nécessité d'y suppléer par une voie ferrée.

Le 26 Décembre, 1886, une Compagnie Belge se constitua pour résoudre le problème; après dix-sept mois d'un labeur acharné et au prix d'un million, le levé du terrain était fait et les plans et profils de la voie étaient arrêtés.

Restait à résoudre la question financière. Elle le fut, grâce au concours de l'État Belge. Une Loi du 29 Juillet, 1889, approuvée à la Chambre par 88 voix contre 6 abstentions et au Sénat par 49 voix contre 1 abstention, a autorisé le Gouvernement à souscrire les actions ordinaires au montant de 10,000,000 fr. Le surplus du capital, représenté par 15,000,000 fr. d'actions privilégiées, fut souscrit par le public.

Aujourd'hui, les travaux sont en pleine activité, et déjà la voie s'établit dans la première section du tracé, entre Matadi et l'embouchure de la Mpozo.

Le concours de l'État Belge à cette entreprise sera d'un grand intérêt pour la Belgique, dont l'industrie et le commerce sont appelés à profiter en toute première ligne des facilités nouvelles que va leur procurer la construction du chemin de fer.

Mais l'État du Congo surtout y trouvera des éléments de développement d'une incalculable importance.

Sous l'empire de cette conviction et réalisant des intentions patriotiques que depuis longtemps on pouvait pressentir, le Roi écrivit, sous la date du 5 Août, 1889, à M. le Ministre des Finances, la lettre que voici :—

“ Cher Ministre,

“ Je n'ai jamais cessé d'appeler l'attention de mes compatriotes sur la nécessité de porter leurs vues vers les contrées d'outre-mer.

“ L'histoire enseigne que les pays à territoire restreint ont un intérêt moral et matériel à rayonner au delà de leurs étroites frontières. La Grèce fonda sur les rivages de la Méditerranée d'opulentes cités, foyers des arts et de la civilisation. Venise, plus tard, établit sa grandeur sur le développement de ses relations maritimes et commerciales, non moins que sur ses succès politiques. Les Pays-Bas possèdent aux Indes 30,000,000 de sujets qui échangent contre les denrées tropicales les produits de la mère patrie.

“ C'est en servant la cause de l'humanité et du progrès que des peuples de second rang apparaissent comme des membres utiles de la grande famille des nations. Plus que nulle autre, une nation manufacturière et commerçante comme la nôtre doit s'efforcer d'assurer des débouchés à tous ses travailleurs, à ceux de la pensée, du capital et des mains.

“ Ces préoccupations patriotiques ont dominé ma vie. Ce sont elles qui ont déterminé la création de l'œuvre Africaine.

“ Mes peines n'ont pas été stériles : un jeune et vaste État, dirigé de Bruxelles, a pris pacifiquement place au soleil, grâce à l'appui bienveillant des Puissances qui ont applaudi à ses débuts. Des Belges l'administrent, tandis que d'autres compatriotes, chaque jour plus nombreux, y font déjà fructifier leurs capitaux.

“ L'immense réseau fluvial du Congo supérieur ouvre à nos efforts des voies de communication rapides et économiques qui permettent de pénétrer directement jusqu'au centre du Continent Africain. La construction du chemin de fer de la région des cataractes, désormais assurée grâce au vote récent de la Législature, accroîtra notablement ces facilités d'accès. Dans ces conditions, un grand avenir est réservé au Congo, dont l'immense valeur va prochainement éclater à tous les yeux.

“ Au lendemain de cet acte considérable, j'ai cru de mon devoir de mettre la Belgique à même, lorsque la mort viendra me frapper, de profiter de mon œuvre ainsi

que du travail de ceux qui m'ont aidé à la fonder et à la diriger et que je remercie ici une fois de plus. J'ai donc fait, comme Souverain de l'État Indépendant du Congo, le testament que je vous adresse; je vous demanderai de le communiquer aux Chambres Législatives au moment qui vous paraîtra le plus opportun.

"Les débuts des entreprises comme celles qui m'ont tant préoccupé sont difficiles et onéreux. J'ai tenu à en supporter les charges. Un Roi, pour rendre service à son pays, ne doit pas craindre de concevoir et de poursuivre la réalisation d'une œuvre même téméraire en apparence. La richesse d'un Souverain consiste dans la prospérité publique: elle seule peut constituer à ses vœux un trésor enviable qu'il doit tendre constamment à accroître.

"Jusqu'au jour de ma mort, je continuerai, dans la même pensée d'intérêt national qui m'a guidé jusqu'ici, à diriger et à soutenir notre œuvre Africaine; mais si, sans attendre ce terme, il convenait au pays de contracter des liens plus étroits avec mes possessions du Congo, je n'hésiterais pas à les mettre à sa disposition. Je serais heureux, de mon vivant, de l'en voir en pleine jouissance. Laissez-moi, en attendant, vous dire combien je suis reconnaissant envers les Chambres comme envers le Gouvernement, pour l'aide qu'ils m'ont prêtée à diverses reprises dans cette création. Je ne crois pas me tromper en affirmant que la Belgique en retirera de sérieux avantages et verra s'ouvrir devant elle, sur un continent nouveau, d'heureuses et larges perspectives.

"Croyez-moi, &c.
(Signé) "LÉOPOLD."

Le testament du Roi est conçu en ces termes :—

"Nous, Léopold II, Roi des Belges, Souverain de l'État Indépendant du Congo,

"Voulant assurer à notre patrie bien aimée les fruits de l'œuvre que, depuis de longues années, nous poursuivons dans le Continent Africain, avec le concours généreux et dévoué de beaucoup de Belges;

"Convaincu de contribuer ainsi à assurer à la Belgique, si elle le veut, les débouchés indispensables à son commerce et à son industrie et d'ouvrir à l'activité de ses enfants des voies nouvelles;

"Déclarons par les présentes léguer et transmettre, après notre mort, à la Belgique tous nos droits souverains sur l'État Indépendant du Congo, tels qu'ils ont été reconnus par les Déclarations, Conventions, et Traités intervenus depuis 1884 entre les Puissances étrangères, d'une part, l'Association Internationale du Congo et l'État Indépendant du Congo, d'autre part, ainsi que tous biens, droits, et avantages attachés à cette souveraineté.

"En attendant que la Législature Belge se soit prononcée sur l'acceptation de mes dispositions prédites, la souveraineté sera exercée collectivement par le Conseil des trois Administrateurs de l'État Indépendant du Congo et par le Gouverneur-Général.

Fait à Bruxelles, le 2 Août, 1889.

(Signé) "LÉOPOLD."

C'est là, Messieurs, un langage vraiment Royal, et comme le couronnement grandiose d'un règne de vingt-cinq ans, consacré tout entier à l'accroissement de la prospérité, de la grandeur de la patrie.

Le Roi, qui comptait d'abord ne pas faire connaître dès à présent ses intentions, nous a autorisés à les rendre publiques. Et au moment où nous venons proposer aux Chambres Législatives un nouvel acte dans l'intérêt du Congo, plus important que les précédents, il fallait en effet que la Belgique les connût.

Comme nous le rappelions tout à l'heure, l'aide que le pays avait cru assurer au Roi par l'autorisation relative à l'emprunt de 1887 lui a, en très grande partie, fait défaut. D'autre part, le chemin de fer ne sera terminé que dans quatre années environ et, même après son achèvement, il faudra un certain temps pour qu'il produise les résultats économiques et financiers que l'on est légitimement en droit d'espérer.

Or, en attendant, l'État du Congo n'est pas en mesure de faire face à ses charges. Et cela d'autant moins qu'elles vont augmenter encore par suite du fait considérable qui vient de s'accomplir à Bruxelles.

Il y a quelques jours, les Plénipotentiaires de dix-sept Puissances appartenant à quatre continents signaient l'Acte Général destiné à mettre définitivement fin aux horreurs, aux ignominies de la Traite des Nègres. Cet Acte, œuvre de longues et

laborieuses négociations, fera époque dans l'histoire : il est le résultat final d'un effort qui a rempli le siècle et qui, depuis quinze ans surtout, n'a plus cessé d'être à l'ordre du jour des préoccupations publiques.

Dès 1876, le Roi avait déclaré solennellement que l'extinction de la Traite était un des objets essentiels du mouvement qu'il voulait provoquer, et la situation sous ce rapport avait été mise, dans sa triste vérité, sous les yeux du pays. Les expéditions entreprises depuis cette époque, les témoignages accumulés des missionnaires et des voyageurs, montrèrent de plus en plus l'étendue du mal, la nécessité d'y mettre un terme. La Conférence de Berlin avait imposé aux Puissances l'obligation de combattre la Traite sur terre comme sur mer, mais sans arrêter un plan positif d'action. Trois ans plus tard, le 5 Mai, 1888, le Souverain Pontife, dans sa lettre Encyclique aux Evêques Brésiliens, faisait un pressant appel dans le même but au sentiment religieux des nations Chrétiennes. Le Cardinal Lavigerie se fit l'apôtre de cette généreuse croisade, et sa parole énergique remua l'Europe tout entière. Les Assemblées Législatives s'émurent : deux d'entre elles, et des plus illustres, le Reichstag Allemand et le Parlement Britannique, se firent l'organe de la conscience générale et réclamèrent l'intervention active des Gouvernements.

C'est dans ces circonstances que, le 17 Septembre, 1888, le Marquis de Salisbury invitait le Gouvernement Belge à prendre l'initiative d'une Conférence des Puissances en vue d'une action combinée contre la Traite. "La grande œuvre entreprise par le Roi des Belges," disait-il, "en constituant l'État du Congo, et le vif intérêt que prend Sa Majesté à toutes les questions qui intéressent le bien-être des races de l'Afrique, portent le Gouvernement de la Reine à espérer que la Belgique pourrait être disposée à prendre l'initiative d'inviter les Puissances à une Conférence à Bruxelles, aux fins d'examiner les meilleurs moyens d'obtenir la suppression graduelle de la Traite des Esclaves sur le Continent d'Afrique et la fermeture immédiate de tous les marchés extérieurs que la Traite approvisionne encore de nos jours."

Cet appel a été entendu. Ouverte le 18 Novembre dernier, la Conférence, après sept mois de délibérations, a arrêté un système général de répression sur terre comme sur mer, dont l'effet sera décisif si les moyens d'exécution répondent à la grandeur de la tâche. C'est l'État Indépendant du Congo qui, par sa situation géographique, sera à l'avant-garde du mouvement civilisateur ; c'est à lui qu'incombera au premier chef l'obligation d'arrêter les dévastations et les massacres des chasseurs d'hommes. Il aura, pour remplir cette mission sainte, des stations nouvelles à établir, des camps à organiser, des bateaux à conduire aux extrêmes limites de son vaste Empire, afin de contenir et châtier les malfaiteurs, de protéger et relever leurs victimes.

Les Puissances n'ont pas méconnu les sacrifices étendus que comporte une telle mission ; elles ont voulu y pourvoir dans une certaine mesure en autorisant l'établissement de droits d'entrée, mais l'exécution de leurs décisions à cet égard est forcément différée par les formalités et les conditions qu'impose le droit public des diverses Puissances. Et cependant, c'est un devoir d'agir sans délai. Tout en se préparant en vue d'une action générale, il importe d'intervenir sur l'heure là où le sang coule, où le meurtre et le brigandage sévissent à l'état chronique.

C'est dans ces conditions, Messieurs, que les négociations engagées depuis quelque temps déjà entre le Gouvernement Belge et l'État Indépendant du Congo ont abouti à la Convention que nous soumettons avec confiance à votre approbation.

Aux termes de l'Article 1^{er}, la Belgique ferait à l'État du Congo un prêt de 25,000,000 fr. payables pour un cinquième immédiatement et pour le surplus en dix annuités de 2,000,000 fr. chacune. Inscrites aux livres de la Dette Publique de l'État Indépendant, ces avances ne seraient pas productives d'intérêts pendant le terme de dix ans.

Le chiffre plus considérable de la première annuité se justifie, d'une part, par la nécessité de contribuer à combler certains arriérés, de l'autre part l'intérêt qu'il y a à assurer l'exécution immédiate des décisions de la Conférence. Il convient que l'État du Congo soit le premier en mesure de faire sentir au cœur de l'Afrique que le règne de la barbarie est fini et qu'un Code nouveau va régir les rapports des populations qui l'habitent.

Si, pour la première fois, le Trésor Belge se trouve ainsi engagé dans l'œuvre Africaine, l'Article 2 consacre, dès à présent, le droit du pays à une annexion dont la lettre Royale faisait déjà entrevoir l'éventualité.

Six mois après l'expiration du terme de dix ans, alors que le chemin de fer sera déjà en exploitation depuis un certain nombre d'années et que tout le territoire sera bien mieux connu encore qu'il ne l'est aujourd'hui, la Belgique aura à décider si elle veut que le Congo se transforme en Colonie Belge.

Et le pays n'arrêtera cette décision qu'en pleine connaissance de cause. L'Article 3 prescrit en effet à l'État du Congo de communiquer d'ici là, à l'État Belge, tous les renseignements que celui-ci jugerait désirables sur sa situation économique, commerciale et financière. Il pourra notamment prendre connaissance des budgets de recettes et de dépenses ainsi que des relevés de la Douane.

Il n'est pas nécessaire, Messieurs, d'insister sur la grave portée de la résolution à prendre à ce moment-là et sur l'influence décisive qu'elle aura sur les destinées du pays.

Le Cabinet actuel a d'avance fait connaître ses vues à cet égard ; il estime que l'acquisition du Congo sera pour la Belgique un notable accroissement d'importance et de richesse.

Si, en théorie, la politique coloniale a ses détracteurs, comme elle a ses partisans, la question semble résolue, sur le terrain pratique, par l'exemple de toutes les nations. Aucune ne voudrait renoncer à la moindre partie de ses possessions d'outre-mer. Toutes, au contraire, se préoccupent de les étendre et de les multiplier. Les intérêts industriels, commerciaux, maritimes font, sous ce rapport, la loi aux Gouvernements, et le mouvement s'accroît en présence des tendances protectionnistes, qui se généralisent chaque jour davantage.

Mais le moment semble n'être pas venu d'examiner ces graves questions d'une manière approfondie.

Comme les termes de la Convention le disent et comme nous l'avons rappelé déjà, l'avenir est complètement réservé, et c'est en toute liberté que le problème sera résolu ; mais d'ici à dix ans, l'opinion publique, complètement éclairée, se sera assurément prononcée de manière à rendre toute discussion inutile.

Si, contrairement à notre conviction, c'est à une conclusion négative que l'on aboutit, la Belgique n'aura fait à l'État, qui demeurera ainsi indépendant d'elle, qu'un simple prêt ; et, non seulement elle aura obtenu en retour d'un sacrifice temporaire d'intérêts, un droit d'option, dont la valeur ne saurait être méconnue, mais riche, prospère et heureuse, elle aura contribué à remplir un devoir d'humanité envers des populations déshéritées, tout en assurant, dans tous les cas, au travail national de vastes débouchés.

Dans l'hypothèse ainsi prévue, il ne serait pas équitable que le capital avancé de 25,000,000 fr. devint immédiatement exigible.

L'État du Congo pourrait le conserver pendant dix années encore, mais à charge d'en servir l'intérêt à 3½ pour cent, soit l'équivalent de l'intérêt auquel l'État Belge emprunte lui-même. De plus, les sommes à provenir de concessions de terres ou de mines domaniales devraient être affectées, même avant le terme fixé, à des remboursements partiels.

Telle est, Messieurs, la Convention que nous avons l'honneur de vous soumettre. Nous estimons qu'elle répond au sentiment public et mérite votre approbation.

Le 12 Septembre, 1876, en ouvrant la Conférence Géographique, le Roi disait qu'il ne serait pas insensible à l'honneur qui résulterait pour son pays de ce que des mesures importantes en vue de la répression de la Traite fussent datées de Bruxelles.

C'est là aujourd'hui un fait accompli et dans des conditions qui dépassent les espérances.

Au point de vue spécial de la Belgique, l'Acte que nous vous proposons aujourd'hui peut n'avoir pas des conséquences moins décisives. Avec le Roi, nous avons la confiance qu'elles seront heureuses pour la patrie.

Le Ministre des Finances,

(Signé) A. BEERNAERT.

Le Ministre de la Justice,

(Signé) JULES LE JEUNE.

Le Ministre de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction
Publique,

(Signé) J. DEVOLDER.

Le Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Industrie, et
des Travaux Publics,

(Signé) LÉON DE BRUYN.

Le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères,

(Signé) Le Prince DE CHIMAY.

Le Ministre de la Guerre,

(Signé) PONTUS.

Le Ministre des Chemins de Fer, Postes, et
Télégraphes,

(Signé) J. VANDENPEEREBOOM.

Projet de Loi.

Léopold II, Roi des Belges, à tous présents et à venir, salut.
Sur la proposition de notre Conseil des Ministres,

Nous avons arrêté et arrêtons :

Notre Ministre des Finances présentera, en notre nom, aux Chambres Législatives, le Projet de Loi dont la teneur suit :—

Article 1^{er}. Est approuvée la Convention ci-annexée conclue le 1^{er} Juillet, 1890, au nom de l'État, avec l'État Indépendant du Congo.

Art. 2. Il est ouvert au Département des Finances un crédit de 5,000,000 fr. Il sera couvert par les ressources extraordinaires du Trésor.

Donné à Ostende, le 7 Juillet, 1890.

(Signé) LÉOPOLD.

Par le Roi :

Le Ministre des Finances,

(Signé) A. BEERNAERT.

Le Ministre de la Justice,

(Signé) JULES LE JEUNE.

Le Ministre de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction
Publique,

(Signé) J. DEVOLDER.

Le Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Industrie,
et des Travaux Publics,

(Signé) LÉON DE BRUYN.

Le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères,

(Signé) Le Prince DE CHIMAY.

Le Ministre de la Guerre,

(Signé) PONTUS.

Le Ministre des Chemins de Fer, Postes, et
Télégraphes,

(Signé) J. VANDENPEEREBOOM.

Convention.

Entre l'État Belge, représenté par M. A. Beernaert, Ministre des Finances, agissant sous réserve de l'approbation de la Législature et l'État Indépendant du Congo, représenté par M. E. van Eetvelde, Administrateur-Général du Département des Affaires Étrangères, à ce autorisé par le Roi Souverain, est intervenue la Convention suivante :—

ARTICLE I.

L'État Belge s'engage à avancer, à titre de prêt à l'État Indépendant du Congo, une somme de 25,000,000 fr., et ce savoir :—

Cinq millions de francs aussitôt après l'approbation de la Législature, et 2,000,000 fr. par an pendant dix ans, à partir de ce premier versement.

Pendant ces dix années, les sommes ainsi prêtées ne seront point productives d'intérêts.

ARTICLE II.

Six mois après l'expiration du prédit terme de dix ans, l'État Belge pourra, s'il le juge bon, s'annexer l'État Indépendant du Congo, avec tous les biens, droits, et avantages attachés à la souveraineté de cet État, tels qu'ils ont été reconnus et fixés, notamment par l'Acte Général de Berlin du 26 Février, 1885, et par l'Acte Général de Bruxelles, et la Déclaration du 2 Juillet, 1890 ; mais aussi à charge de reprendre les obligations du dit État envers les tiers, le Roi Souverain refusant expressément toute indemnité du chef des sacrifices personnels qu'il s'est imposés.

Une Loi réglera le régime spécial sous lequel les territoires du Congo seront alors placés.

ARTICLE III.

Dès à présent, l'État Belge recevra de l'État Indépendant du Congo tels renseignements qu'il jugera désirables sur la situation économique, commerciale, et financière

de celui-ci. Il pourra notamment demander communication des budgets de recettes et de dépenses, et des relevés de la Douane quant aux entrées et aux sorties.

Ces renseignements ne doivent avoir d'autre but que d'éclairer le Gouvernement Belge, et celui-ci ne s'immiscera en aucune manière dans l'Administration de l'État Indépendant du Congo, qui continuera à n'être rattaché à la Belgique que par l'union personnelle des deux Couronnes.

Toutefois, l'État du Congo s'engage à ne contracter désormais aucun nouvel emprunt sans l'assentiment du Gouvernement Belge.

ARTICLE IV.

Si, au terme prédit, la Belgique décidait de ne pas accepter l'annexion de l'État du Congo, la somme de 25,000,000 fr. prêtée, inscrite au grand livre de sa dette, ne deviendrait exigible qu'après un nouveau terme de dix ans, mais elle serait entretemps productive d'un intérêt annuel de $3\frac{1}{2}$ pour cent, payable par semestre, et même avant ce terme, l'État Indépendant du Congo devrait affecter à des remboursements partiels, toutes les sommes à provenir de cessions de terres ou de mines domaniales.

Fait en double à Bruxelles, le 1^{er} Juillet, 1890.

(Signé)

A. BEERNAERT.
VAN EETVELDE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 27.

Extract from the "Indépendance Belge" of July 11, 1890.

UNE OBSERVATION PRÉALABLE.—Avant tout examen des documents qui viennent d'être soumis à la Chambre des Représentants, une observation s'impose. Elle est de pure forme et réserve intégralement le fond de la question du prêt au Congo, mais il nous semble qu'elle a son importance au point de vue diplomatique.

Cette observation, que nous présenterons sous la forme interrogative, la voici :—

La Convention conclue entre l'État Belge et l'État Indépendant du Congo n'a-t-elle pas été signée six mois trop tôt ?

Elle vise en effet, comme s'il était déjà une réalité définitive, un Acte qui n'est encore qu'une espérance : nous voulons parler de l'Acte Général de la Conférence Antiesclavagiste et de la Déclaration relative aux droits d'entrée dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo, Déclaration qui fait partie intégrante de l'Acte Général, dont elle est en quelque sorte la condition.

La Convention étant du 1^{er} Juillet, on peut à la rigueur s'expliquer l'inadvertance des Signataires, M. Beernaert pour l'État Belge, M. van Eetvelde pour l'État Indépendant du Congo.

A cette date en effet, on pouvait croire que l'Acte Général et la Déclaration seraient signés le lendemain par tous les membres de la Conférence qui devait se réunir le 2 Juillet pour terminer son œuvre. On pouvait compter sur l'arrivée du sceau de la Turquie et sur l'adhésion des Pays-Bas.

Mais le 2 Juillet au contraire, outre que le sceau de la Turquie était toujours en route—ce qui ne tire pas à conséquence, puisqu'il est certain qu'il finira par venir, l'adhésion de la Porte étant acquise—les Pays-Bas maintenaient leur opposition à la Déclaration, tout au moins leurs réserves. Un délai de six mois était laissé au Cabinet de La Haye, et le Ministre d'Angleterre proclamait que la signature du Gouvernement Britannique était donnée sous condition de l'adhésion de toutes les Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin en 1885 et de toutes les Puissances représentées à la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles.

L'adhésion de ces dix-sept Puissances est donc escomptée à tort dans la Convention et dans l'Exposé des Motifs du Projet de Loi tendant à son approbation, puisqu'au lieu de dix-sept il n'y en a que seize, y compris la Turquie.

Et si le 1^{er} Juillet, date de la Convention, l'inadvertance est explicable, elle ne l'est plus le 7, date de la signature Royale et du contreseing Ministériel du Projet de Loi approuvant cette Convention. Car le 7 on savait le délai accordé aux Pays-Bas, et que le Gouvernement Néerlandais n'avait pas encore renoncé à ses réserves.

Est-on sûr aujourd'hui de l'adhésion des Pays-Bas ? Nous ne demandons pas mieux, et s'il en est ainsi notre observation tombe.

Mais s'il reste le moindre doute à cet égard, on peut se demander si la Convention

prématurément soumise à l'approbation de la Législature est bien le moyen d'amener les Pays-Bas à résipiscence.

On disait à la Conférence Antiesclavagiste : Il faut au Congo de l'argent pour l'accomplissement de votre œuvre, pour la répression de la Traite dont l'extension rapide n'avait pu être prévue à Berlin.

Et les Plénipotentiaires en convenaient.

Soit, disait de son côté le Gouvernement Néerlandais, mais de l'argent sous les espèces de droits d'entrée au Congo, cela ne me va pas.

Résistance très critiquée, comme on sait.

Mais aujourd'hui, en présence de la Convention et du Projet de Loi, qui nous dit que le Gouvernement d'une nation marchande dont la presse Anglaise stigmatise la rapacité, ce qui n'est pas non plus le moyen de l'attendrir, ne tiendra pas ce raisonnement économique ?

De l'argent, vous en avez maintenant puisqu'on vous prête 25,000,000 fr., et puisqu'il est à peu près certain que ces 25,000,000 fr. ne seront jamais remboursés, la reprise du Congo par la Belgique étant escomptée par la Convention comme l'adhésion du Cabinet de La Haye. Vous n'en êtes pas à 500,000 fr. près. Les droits d'entrée deviennent donc inutiles, et je refuse décidément ma signature.

A ce discours les Puissances représentées à la Conférence Antiesclavagiste, la Belgique en tête, répondraient sans doute que le prêt de 25,000,000 fr. ne couvre pas toutes les dépenses de l'État Indépendant du Congo, et que pour atteindre l'équilibre ce n'est pas trop d'y ajouter, outre les sacrifices personnels que le Souverain de cet État continuera de s'imposer avec le généreux désintéressement qui dès le début a caractérisé son œuvre, le produit des droits d'entrée dont seize Puissances sur dix-sept ont déjà reconnu la légitimité.

Mais si la nation Néerlandaise est aussi marchande et rapace que l'assure la presse Anglaise, n'est-il pas à craindre que ces considérations ne la laissent assez froide, et que son Gouvernement ne s'inspire de cette froideur pour dire aux nations généreuses dont le désintéressement ne l'intéresse pas :—S'il faut un supplément de ressources, qu'on le trouve, nous n'y voyons pas d'inconvénient. Que la Belgique le donne ou le prête, à son choix ; quelques millions de plus ou de moins ne sont pas pour l'embarrasser puisqu'elle en est à vingt-cinq. Mais qu'on trouve autre chose que les droits d'entrée interdits pour vingt ans, de par le Traité de Berlin, 1885. Je n'en démordrai pas.

De sorte que, dans cette hypothèse, pour n'avoir pas attendu le délai accordé aux Pays-Bas, la Convention du 1^{er} Juillet aurait un triple inconvénient : encourager le Cabinet de La Haye dans sa résistance ; stériliser l'œuvre laborieux et admirable de la Conférence de Bruxelles ; obliger l'État Belge à un prêt plus considérable.

Encore une fois ces observations ne préjugent rien quant au fond de la question ; elles n'impliquent pas la condamnation du principe d'une Convention qu'il nous reste à étudier de près, et qui, nous pouvons le reconnaître dès à présent, échappe à la plupart des critiques que nous suggérait récemment la combinaison, invraisemblable, exposée par le "Courrier de Bruxelles."

Mais elles prouvent tout au moins qu'en cette circonstance, comme en d'autres, le Ministère a fait preuve d'une singulière légèreté, d'une imprudence compromettante.

No. 28.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 14.)

(No. 213. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 11, 1890.

SIR JOHN KIRK and I have already expressed our sense of the services rendered to us by the British Delegates to the Anti-Slave Trade Conference, but I desire to bring to your Lordship's special notice the great assistance we received from Mr. Wylde, of the African Department of the Foreign Office, whose thorough knowledge of the questions we had to discuss was of the greatest use to us, and who spared neither pains nor labour in acquainting us with the manner in which they were viewed by the Foreign Office.

I venture also to express our grateful sense of the valuable advice and support we received from Sir Percy Anderson throughout the negotiations, which, under your Lordship's direction, guided us through several difficult crises and enabled us to traverse them successfully.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 29.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 14.)

(No. 217. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 12, 1890.

WITH reference to my telegram of to-day respecting the demand made by the Porte that the name and tonnage of Turkish vessels should be marked in Turkish characters on the poop instead of in Latin as prescribed by Article XXXIV of the General Act of the Brussels Conference, I have the honour to report that all the Governments represented on the Maritime Commission, namely, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Russia, have consented to admit this modification provided the Porte is invited to make the name and tonnage of Turkish vessels in Latin characters also.

I inclose a draft of an answer to this effect which Baron Lambermont proposes to address to the Turkish Minister here when the assent of Her Majesty's Government to the proposed modification is notified to him, and on the receipt of which Carathéodory Effendi is prepared to sign the General Act.

Baron Lambermont urges that there should be no unnecessary delay in securing the Turkish signature lest the Porte should raise other reserves.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 29.

Baron Lambermont to the Turkish Minister.

M. le Ministre,

Bruxelles, le Juillet, 1890.

EN m'informant qu'elle a reçu l'autorisation de signer l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles et la Déclaration qui y est annexée, votre Excellence a fait la réserve que les inscriptions prescrites par l'Article XXXIV seront faites, pour ce qui concerne les navires Ottomans, en caractères et en chiffres Turcs.

Après avoir consulté les Représentants des Puissances qui ont particulièrement contribué à l'élaboration du Chapitre III du Traité, j'ai l'honneur de donner acte à votre Excellence de cette réserve, laquelle porte non sur le fond des stipulations mais sur un point d'exécution.

J'exprime en même temps le vœu que le Gouvernement Impérial interprète la disposition dont il s'agit en ce sens qu'à la suite des énonciations en caractères et en chiffres Turcs il sera placé une traduction en caractères et en chiffres Latins. Mention des explications échangées pourra être faite dans le Protocole mentionné à l'avant-dernier paragraphe de l'Article XXIX de l'Acte Général.

Persuadé que rien n'empêchera désormais votre Excellence de procéder à la signature des Actes de la Conférence, je saisis, &c.

(Signé) LAMBERMONT.

No. 30.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 14.)

(No. 218. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 13, 1890.

DURING my absence from Brussels after the signature of the General Act the President of the Conference consented, at the earnest request of several of the Plenipotentiaries who desired to spare Baron de Gericke mortification to omit all mention of the declaration which he made at the plenary meeting of the Conference on the 27th ultimo and of his withdrawal of it on the following day by order of his Government from the Protocols of these two days' proceedings (Protocols 29 and 30).

Since my return I have been asked whether I saw any objection to this course, and I have replied that though it was perhaps not quite regular I willingly assented to it in order to spare Baron Gericke's feelings, since the President of the Conference had sanctioned it.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 31.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 197.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, July 16, 1890.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 204, Slave Trade Conference, of the 2nd instant, I have to express to yourself and to Sir John Kirk the cordial acknowledgments of Her Majesty's Government for the zeal and ability which you have devoted to their service during the arduous and protracted labours of the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels, and for the valuable assistance which you have thus rendered to a cause in which they feel so deep an interest as that of the suppression of slavery.

I take advantage of this opportunity to request you to be good enough to inform Sir A. Havelock, Mr. Wylde, and Captain Moore, the British Delegates, that I have not failed to appreciate the efficient co-operation which they have afforded to you throughout the sessions of the Conference.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 32.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 272.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 17, 1890.

I TRANSMIT herewith, for your Excellency's information, copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople, reporting the steps taken conjointly by the British and German Embassies there to induce the Sultan to authorize the Turkish Plenipotentiaries at Brussels to join in signing the General Act of the Slave Trade Conference.*

Mr. Fane's action has been approved.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 33.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 198. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, July 18, 1890.

I HAVE to state that I approve the declaration by which your Lordship and Sir J. Kirk accompanied your announcement to the Conference that you were authorized to sign both the General Act and the Declaration of the Conference, upon certain conditions laid down by Her Majesty's Government, and of which copy was inclosed in your Lordship's despatch No. 204 of the 2nd instant.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 34.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Mr. Fane.

(No. 16. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 18, 1890.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 13 of the 4th instant, reporting the steps taken jointly by the British and German Embassies to induce the Sultan to authorize Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary at Brussels to join his colleagues in signing the General Act of the Slave Trade Conference, I have to state that I approve your action as therein reported.

I have at the same time to request you to make a communication to the Porte acknowledging its promptitude in meeting the wishes of Her Majesty's Government in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 35.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 21.)

(No. 219. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 18, 1890.

IN confirmation of my telegram of to-day, I have the honour to report that the Turkish Minister at Brussels signed this day the General Act of the Brussels Conference and the accompanying Declaration authorizing the imposition of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo.

With reference to the modification proposed by the Porte of Article XXXIV of the General Act, to the effect that the names and tonnage of Turkish vessels navigating within the Slave Trade zone should be marked on the poop in Turkish instead of in Latin characters, Carathéodory Effendi received, previously to signing, an official communication from the President of the Conference stating that the Conference, while taking note of this reserve, desired that the names and tonnage of Turkish dhows should be marked in Latin as well as in Turkish characters.

Holland is now the only Power which took part in the Brussels Conference that has not signed the General Act and Declaration on account of her objections to the establishment of duties on her imports into the Congo Basin. She possesses no territory in Africa, and her attitude on this question, as well as on that of the restrictions on the liquor traffic with Africa which she succeeded in curtailing within the narrowest possible limits, has been dictated solely by her commercial interests, but, in view of the condition which we were instructed to attach to our signature of these Acts, her abstention from signing them imperils the whole work of the Conference.

Baron Lambermont is fully alive to this danger, and is desirous by every possible means to induce Holland to come in, and with this view he proposes that, even if she should not have signed the Acts before the Technical Commission meets to settle the new Tariff for the Congo Basin, she should be allowed a voice in the deliberations of the Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 35.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 21.)

(No. 220. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 19, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, copies of a letter, and its inclosure, which I have received from the Committee of the Aborigines Protection Society, recording its grateful appreciation of the valuable measures for the suppression of the Traffic in Slaves and for the restriction of the sale and distribution of fire-arms and alcoholic liquors among the natives of Africa adopted by the International Conference of Brussels, and expressing its great indebtedness to the King of the Belgians, to Her Majesty's Government, and to the President, Plenipotentiaries, and Delegates to the Conference for their co-operation in securing these important and substantial benefits to the people of Africa.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 36.

Aborigines Protection Society to Lord Vivian.

My Lord,

London, July 15, 1890.

BY order of the Committee of the Aborigines Protection Society, we have the honour to forward to your Lordship a copy of a Resolution passed at its meeting on the 10th instant.

In transmitting this, we beg to assure your Lordship of the great indebtedness felt by the friends and supporters of the Aborigines Protection Society, as well as by its Committee, for your zealous and generous efforts during the prolonged and arduous labours of the International Conference at Brussels towards obtaining the large

measure of advantage to the natives of Africa which it is hoped may ensue from the deliberations and decisions of the Conference.

We have, &c.

(Signed) **ALEXANDER McARTHUR**, *Chairman of Meeting.*
Treasurer.
H. R. FOX BOURNE, *Secretary.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 36.

Resolution.

THAT this Committee records its grateful appreciation of the important services rendered to the cause of humanity by His Majesty the King of the Belgians and Her Majesty's Government in convening and organizing the International Conference lately held at Brussels, and by the Baron Lambertmont, Lord Vivian, Sir John Kirk, and other Plenipotentiaries and Delegates at the Conference in securing due consideration and adoption of most valuable proposals for the suppression of the Traffic in Slaves and restriction of the sale and distribution of fire-arms and alcoholic liquors among the natives of Africa, and earnestly hopes that the labours of the Conference will result in substantial benefits to the people inhabiting that continent.

No. 37.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 21.)

(No. 221. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 19, 1890.

I BEG to express my most grateful acknowledgment of the kind terms in which your Lordship has been good enough to notice such services as Sir John Kirk and I have been able to render to the work of the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels, the successful issue of which is a sufficient recompense for our labours.

I have not failed to convey to Sir Arthur Havelock, Mr. Wylde, and Captain Moore, R.N., the British Delegates, your Lordship's appreciation, which I fully indorse, of the efficient co-operation which they have afforded to Sir John Kirk and to myself throughout the deliberations of the Conference.

I have, &c.

(Signed) **VIVIAN.**

No. 38.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 199. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, July 21, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 118 of the 13th instant, I have to inform your Lordship that I approve of your having consented to the omission from the Protocols (Nos. 29 and 30) of all mention of Baron de Gericke's declaration in respect of duties in the Congo, and of the subsequent withdrawal of that declaration, as therein reported.

I am, &c.

(Signed) **SALISBURY.**

No. 39.

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 23.)

My Lord,

Exchange, New Street, July 22, 1890.

I AM directed by the Chairman of this Chamber to transmit to your Lordship the inclosed Memorial.

I am, &c.

(Signed) **W. F. HAYDON**, *Secretary.*

Inclosure in No. 39.

Memorial.

IMPORT DUTY—CONGO TERRITORIES.

To the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,

The humble Memorial of the Council of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce,

Respectfully sheweth :

THAT the proposal made at the Anti-Slavery Conference at Brussels that the Powers holding territories on the Congo should impose an *ad valorem* duty of 10 per cent. on imports into those regions has greatly surprised your memorialists, and aroused their apprehensions.

Your memorialists would draw your Lordship's attention to the fact that Article I of the "Convention between Her Majesty and His Majesty the King of the Belgians acting as founder of, and in the name of, the International Association of the Congo," signed at Berlin the 16th December, 1884, and ratified at Brussels the 9th May, 1885, is as follows:—

"Article I. The International Association of the Congo undertakes not to levy any duty, import or transit, on articles or merchandize imported by British subjects into the said territories, or into any territory which may hereafter come under its government. This freedom from custom-house duties shall extend to merchandize and articles of commerce which shall be transported along the roads or canals constructed, or to be constructed, around the cataracts of the Congo."

That Article IV of the General Act of the Berlin Conference, dated the 26th February, 1885, regulating trade, &c., in the Basin of the Congo, is also as follows:—

"Article IV. Merchandize imported into those regions shall remain free from import and transit dues.

"The Powers reserve to themselves to determine, after the lapse of twenty years, whether this freedom of import shall be retained or not."

Your memorialists thereby understood that merchandize going into and passing through the regions of the Congo was to remain free from import and transit duty for a period of at least twenty years from the date of the signature of the General Act.

Your memorialists, therefore, respectfully protest against the proposals made at the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference being accepted by Her Majesty's Government, on the ground that the imposition of import duty on merchandize would be a departure from the Agreement made with the founder of the Congo Free State and from the resolution come to by the European Powers, on the faith of which traders acted. Your memorialists feel they are the more justified in making this protest, as the power of imposing an export duty in regions of the Congo was not limited either by the Convention or by the Act.

Your memorialists respectfully contend that if so important a provision as that contained in Article I of the Convention and in Article IV of the General Act be disregarded, other provisions of the Act, such as those contained in Articles III and V may eventually be revoked.

Article III provides "That wares of whatever origin imported into these regions, under whatsoever flag, by sea or river, or overland, shall be subject to no other taxes than such as may be levied as fair compensation for expenditure in the interest of trade, and which, for this reason, must be equally borne by the subjects themselves, and by foreigners of all nationalities. All differential dues on vessels as well as on merchandize are forbidden."

And the 1st paragraph of Article V provides: "No Power which exercises or shall exercise sovereign rights in the above-mentioned regions, shall be allowed to grant therein a monopoly or favour of any kind in matters of trade."

Your memorialists, knowing the disadvantages under which they already labour in some of the foreign possessions in Africa, are greatly alarmed lest British trade interests should eventually suffer in a similar manner in the Congo territories.

Your memorialists, therefore, earnestly pray that your Lordship will be pleased to carefully consider the foregoing facts, and will not consent to the imposition of an import or transit duty upon merchandize passing into and through the regions of the

Congo until at least the time named in the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 1885 has elapsed.

And your memorialists will ever pray, &c.

Signed on behalf of the Council of the said Chamber,
J. WILLIAM TONKS, *Chairman*.
W. F. HAYDON, *Secretary*.

Offices of the Chamber, Birmingham, July 22, 1890.

No. 40.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(No. 4. Africa.)

Foreign Office, July 24, 1890.

[Transmits copy of Lord Vivian's No. 219 of July 18, 1890: *ante*, No. 35.]

No. 41.

Mr. Fane to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 25.)

(No. 14. Africa.)

My Lord,

Therapia, July 16, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 13, Africa, of the 4th instant, I have the honour to inclose herewith a copy of a despatch, dated the 8th instant, addressed to the Porte by Carathéodory Effendi, the Ottoman Plenipotentiary at the Brussels Conference.

The Belgian Minister having, about a week ago, expressed to me his suspicion that Carathéodory Effendi was working with the Dutch Plenipotentiary in retarding the conclusion of the business, I took the precaution of assuring myself at the Porte that there was no ground for any such supposition, and the inclosed document shows clearly that the Ottoman Plenipotentiary, beyond stipulating for the very reasonable modification demanded by the Porte in Article XXXIV, has not placed any hindrance in the way of the final completion of the Conference's task.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDMUND FANE.

Inclosure in No. 41.

Carathéodory Effendi to Saïd Pasha.

Bruxelles, le 8 Juillet, 1890.

JE me suis fait un devoir de télégraphier à votre Excellence, le 4 de ce mois, la réception de sa télégramme du même jour, par lequel elle s'est plu à me transmettre l'Ordre de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, notre auguste Maître, m'autorisant à signer l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles.

J'ai tout lieu de croire que d'ici à très peu de temps je serai en mesure d'accomplir l'ordre Impérial après avoir régularisé entièrement l'admission de la réserve qui y était jointe, relative aux inscriptions prescrites par l'Article XXXIV.

Plusieurs Plénipotentiaires ayant quitté Bruxelles le 2 de ce mois, immédiatement après la signature de l'Acte Général et le lendemain, la Conférence étant par conséquent close, il faudrait quelques jours par régler tout ce qui se rapporte à notre réserve et qui n'offre en principe aucune difficulté.

Je me suis mis immédiatement à cet effet en rapport avec le Président de la Conférence et j'ai fait ces démarches nécessaires auprès de mes collègues encore présents à Bruxelles. Les deux auteurs de la proposition concernant les inscriptions prescrites dans l'Article XXXIV, l'Angleterre et la France, ont déjà acquiescé à ma demande, ainsi que l'Italie et la Russie qui a présenté le projet du Chapitre III. Les Plénipotentiaires Allemands étant partis en l'absence du Comte d'Alvensleben, le Baron Lambermont a télégraphié hier à Berlin pour annoncer l'accord intervenu entre

les principaux intéressés, exprimer son propre avis favorable et demander l'acquiescement du Gouvernement Impérial. Des intéressés à la zone maritime, il ne reste donc que le Portugal, dont je ne connais pas encore l'avis, mais dont l'opinion favorable peut être escompté d'avance.

Veillez, &c.

No. 42.

Colonel Euan-Smith to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 26.)

(No. 274.)

My Lord,

Zanzibar, July 2, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith, for the information of your Lordship, copies of two letters addressed to His Highness the Sultan of Zanzibar by Sir John Kirk with reference to the proceedings of the Brussels Conference, and in the capacity of His Highness' Representative there. I have also the honour to transmit a letter of thanks,* which His Highness requests may be forwarded to Sir John Kirk.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

C. B. EUAN-SMITH.

Inclosure 1 in No. 42.

Sir J. Kirk to the Sultan of Zanzibar.

(Private.)

Dear Seyid,

Brussels, June 7, 1890.

I HOPE shortly to be able to send you the result of our deliberations in the Conference, as the work is now nearly ended.

Hitherto it has been needless to write, as so many important questions were subject to change from time to time as the discussions went on, and any report sent you would, therefore, have been misleading.

So far as the interests of Zanzibar are concerned, I can assure you that there is no ground for you to fear. This you will understand when I state that in all matters affecting the customs and interests of Mussulman countries I have consulted with the Representatives of both Turkey and Persia, and nothing has been admitted that they and I did not agree to.

It is proposed to regulate the trade of arms, but not to such an extent as you have already done on the coast. The rules proposed are far less severe, and will, I presume, supersede those now in force, and so facilitate trade.

The next thing is to allow you to prohibit entirely the sale of spirits, for we have agreed that where the religion of the country forbids the use of spirits, there the sale may be stopped, and elsewhere made subject to a duty which is higher than that you now collect.

There will be certain rules as to the issue of dhow passes ("kols"), and also as to the shipment of the crew and passengers.

What we are now discussing refers to your position and to the Congo State: we propose to allow a duty of 10 per cent. to be collected on all imports. This is double what you now get, but the matter is still under discussion, and is objected to by the American Government, and we await the reply of their Government, all the other Powers having given their assent. With this exception our work is now ended, and I trust your Highness will approve what has been done when I send you, conjointly with my colleague M. Göhring, the official copy of the Act.

I assure your Highness that I always read with deep interest the news from Zanzibar.

I know the place is not what it was in my time, but I trust that prosperity will now return and trade revive.

Although I have been here in Brussels for six months, I have during that time had frequently to visit London in order to receive instructions from Lord Salisbury, and I can assure you that no one takes a deeper interest in the welfare of your country than those directing the Government of Her Majesty.

Believe me, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.

* Not printed.

Inclosure 2 in No. 42.

Sir J. Kirk to the Sultan of Zanzibar.

(Private.)

Dear Seyid Ali,

Brussels, June 8, 1890.

SINCE writing yesterday I have obtained a first proof of the result now arrived at by the Conference in which I have the honour to be your First Plenipotentiary.

This embodies all except that referred to by me as still under discussion, namely, the right we propose giving to all the Powers who now are prevented from increasing their import duties of raising them to a maximum of 10 per cent., to allow them to undertake what the new rules will impose upon them.

Believe me, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.

No. 43.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 26.)

(No. 223. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, July 24, 1890.

THE Belgian Government see with regret that the present attitude of Holland, with respect to the signature of the General Act and Declaration, affords no certain prospect that she will be induced to sign those Acts within the six months' delay, which the Conference has allotted for that purpose.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 44.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 28.)

(No. 19. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, July 24, 1890.

I HAD some conversation yesterday with M. Hartsen about the attitude taken up by the Netherlands Government in the question of the proposed imposition of import duties in the Congo State.

I told his Excellency quite unofficially that during a recent visit I had made to England I had derived the impression that the inability of the Netherlands Government to fall in with the unanimous decision of the other Powers on this question had been viewed with much concern, that it was still hoped that on due reflection that Government would find it possible to withdraw their opposition, and that, as far as I could gather, it would be greatly to their interest to do so, since it was to be apprehended that, at the expiry of the six months allowed to the Netherlands for signifying their assent to the arrangement concluded at Brussels, the Powers might of common accord agree to annul those Articles of the Act of Berlin on which the Netherlands based their dissent, and might thereupon "passer outre," leaving the Government of this country in a position of complete isolation. Judging from the language which had been repeatedly held to me here, I felt convinced that this Government shrank from placing themselves in complete antagonism to what might well be described as the rest of the civilized world. As further they had unquestionably asserted themselves very fully at the Conference, and could claim to have defended the trading interests of their subjects, whatever they might be worth, with almost unexampled tenacity, I could not but hope that they would feel that they had done enough for their honour and credit, and that they would now apply themselves to devising some method of extricating themselves, and consequently the Powers, from a position of great embarrassment.

These observations, which I took care to impress upon M. Hartsen, were essentially unofficial, and dictated by a friendly desire to contribute to the settlement of an unpleasant controversy, seemed not to be without effect upon his Excellency. He again repeated that he had been grieved for many reasons at having to take up so rigid a line at Brussels. It was most disagreeable to this Government to find themselves at issue with the rest of Europe. He hoped, therefore, sincerely that some way

might be found out of the difficulty. He then went into some detail on the subject of the resources which, he admitted, it was necessary should be made available for the Congo State. The Belgian Minister, he said, had been with him that morning, and they had talked the matter over. He had learned from Baron d'Anethan that the average rate of the import duties which were contemplated in the Congo State would be 6 per cent. This, on imports valued at 5,000,000 fr., would produce a gross revenue of 300,000 fr., from which must be subtracted some 50,000 fr. for cost of collection, &c., leaving a balance of 250,000 fr. Now he, M. Hartsen, believed that such a sum as that might be obtained, firstly by raising the already existing export duties and extending them to certain as yet exempt merchandize, such as ivory for instance, which, for certain reasons, remained up till now untaxed; and next by levying certain licence duties ("droits de patente") or other taxes of that nature. As an earnest of the desire entertained here to make matters easy for the Congo State, he could only say that the Dutch "industriels," interested in the Congo trade (by whom his Excellency no doubt meant the Rotterdam Company), were willing to make a yearly subvention of 75,000 florins towards the necessities of the State. I observed here that I had heard before of such an offer having been made, but that I believed it had not commended itself to the Representatives of the Congo State.

M. Hartsen, nevertheless, seemed to be of opinion that the solution of the difficulty must be sought in some such compromise, which would have the great advantage of leaving the Act of Berlin intact. He likewise again referred to the doctrine held here that the Brussels Conference were not competent to revise that Act, and mentioned that in the course of an interview which Count de Bylandt had recently had with Sir Philip Currie the correctness of the contention of the Netherlands Government had been to a great extent admitted.

As regards the usefulness of the proposed import duties, M. Hartsen made a somewhat remarkable statement. His opinion, he said, that they would not prove very lucrative had quite lately been strengthened by a visit from the Portuguese Minister, who had told him in so many words that his Government were resolved not to levy any such duties in their own territory, and hoped thereby to make sure of diverting much of the trade from the Congo State.

At the close of our conversation M. Hartsen requested me to assure your Lordship of his sincere desire to arrive at some arrangement that would be satisfactory to all parties concerned.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 45.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received July 28.)

(No. 20. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, July 24, 1890.

IN the course of the conversation related in my immediately preceding despatch, M. Hartsen referred somewhat severely to what he termed the want of straightforwardness shown in the management of affairs in the Congo State. There was no doubt, he said, that in abstaining from levying any export duty on ivory the authorities aimed at making a monopoly of that all-important article. It was very clear that their object was to keep the whole trade as much as possible in their own hands. His Excellency here repeated the remarks which he had already made to me on a former occasion, and which I reported in my despatch No. 10, Africa, of the 23rd April last, and said that grave complaints were made by French and other houses engaged in the Congo trade of the obstacles offered there to legitimate commerce.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 46.

Foreign Office to Birmingham Chamber of Commerce.

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 30, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant, inclosing a Memorial for your Chamber, in regard to the imposition of import duties in the Congo Territories.

In reply I am to state, for the information of your Chairman, that Her Majesty's Government gave their consent to the imposition of these duties in order to enable the Congo State to raise the revenue necessary for the purpose of fulfilling the obligations imposed upon it by the Brussels Conference in regard to the suppression of the Slave Trade, and that there need be no apprehension of differential treatment, as a Commission is to meet to settle the tariff.

I am, &c.
(Signed) P. CURRIE.

No. 47.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(No. 12. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 2, 1890.

I HAVE to state that I approve the language held by you to M. Hartsen, in regard to the attitude taken up by the Netherlands Government in the question of the proposed imposition of import duties in the Congo State, as reported in your despatch No. 19, Africa, Confidential, of the 24th ultimo.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 48.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 4.)

(No. 224. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, August 1, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a note from Baron Lambermont, informing me that the Nuncio had called on him, as President of the Slave Trade Conference, to thank him officially, in the name of the Pope, for the homage rendered by the Conference at its last sitting, at the instance of the Plenipotentiary of Spain, to the efforts made by His Holiness, and by his Agents, to promote the suppression of the Slave Trade, and the cause of the suffering African races, and to promise his co-operation in carrying out the work of the Conference..

The resolution in question is recorded in Protocol No. 33 of the sitting of the 2nd July, copies of which go home by this messenger, and your Lordship had already expressed your approval of the proposal that the Conference should take an opportunity in the course of its proceedings, of making some formal recognition of the action of the Pope in this matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 48.

Baron Lambermont to Lord Vivian.

Milord,

Bruxelles, le 29 Juillet, 1890.

LE Nonce Apostolique est venu, il y a peu de jours, au nom du Souverain Pontife, remercier officiellement le Président de la Conférence, de la motion présentée par le Ministre d'Espagne, et inscrite au Protocole de la dernière séance. Mgr. Nava de Bontife était chargé de me faire connaître toute la satisfaction que le Souverain Pontife avait éprouvé, et, en même temps, de me donner l'assurance que le

Saint-Père prêterait tout son concours à l'accomplissement de l'œuvre de la Conférence.

Votre Excellence n'aura pas oublié qu'au mois de Septembre dernier Lord Salisbury avait approuvé l'idée de décerner à Sa Sainteté quelque hommage au cours des travaux de l'assemblée.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) LAMBERMONT.

No. 49.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 8.)

(No. 16. Africa.)

My Lord,

Therapia, August 2, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, in accordance with the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch No. 16, Africa, of the 18th ultimo, I have made a communication to the Grand Vizier and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, acknowledging the promptitude of the Sublime Porte in meeting the wishes of Her Majesty's Government by authorizing the Ottoman Plenipotentiary to join his colleagues in signing the General Act of the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

No. 50.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 11.)

(No. 229. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, August 9, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT has learnt with pleasure that the General Act and Declaration, together with the Protocols of the Brussels Conference, are shortly to be laid before Parliament. He thinks that the publication of these papers will show the attitude of Holland in its true light, and serve to correct the erroneous statements of the Netherlands press regarding the provisions of the Declaration, and the false impression that it has in any way impaired the principle of equal treatment of the commerce of all nations established by the General Act of Berlin.

He is of opinion that this publication may serve as a starting-point from which to approach the Netherlands Government in the further negotiations for their adhesion to the General Act and Declaration, as to which nothing has been done since the signature of these Acts by the Conference; and he is very anxious that they should be represented on the Technical Commission appointed to arrange the moderate Tariff of import duties to be established in the conventional basin of the Congo. According to the reports received from the Belgian Minister at the Hague, the Netherlands Government have not yet made up their minds as to the course they will pursue in this matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 51.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 14.)

(No. 22. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, August 11, 1890.

MR. FRANCIS W. FOX, who is probably known to your Lordship as an active member of the "Aborigines Protection Society," has been on a visit to this country. He called upon me on his arrival, and informed me that his object in coming here was to discover what means could be found of inducing the Government of the Netherlands to withdraw from the position they had till now taken up in regard to the Brussels Slave Trade Conference, and which threatened entirely to mar the praiseworthy work achieved by that body.

I gathered from Mr. Fox that he hoped to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and he showed me a letter which he had received from Count de Bylandt, advising him to call upon his nephew, M. van der Staal, who is Chef de Cabinet to M. Hartsen.

Mr. Fox seemed very desirous to ascertain from me whether I knew of any proposal which might be favourably entertained by the Dutch Government, and which could be substituted for the import duties to which that Government are so strongly opposed.

Although I did not feel called upon to give Mr. Fox the benefit of my opinion on this point, I mentioned, in the course of our conversation, that I had heard it said (I did not say in what quarter) that perhaps the Dutch Government, or, more correctly speaking, the Rotterdam Company, whose interests they advocate, might be disposed to agree to the imposition of a much heavier duty on spirits which should serve the Congo State in part for fiscal purposes, and, at the same time, should bear effectually on a demoralizing trade. I observed at the same time to Mr. Fox, that I did not know how far such a project would really be thought acceptable here but, even if it were so, it was to be feared that Germany might object to it.

Mr. Fox called upon me again two days later, and gave me an account of the visit he had paid to the Foreign Office, as also of interviews he had had with representatives of the Rotterdam Company. In both quarters, he said, he had found a disposition to increase the duty on spirits, and to replace the proposed import duties by export duties on the eight or ten well-known commodities which make up the bulk of the Congo Trade.

I may mention that, although I had purposely refrained from telling Mr. Fox so, the subject of a heavier tax on spirits had been casually alluded to by M. Hartsen, in one of his recent conversations with me. It was of interest to me, therefore, to ascertain, through Mr. Fox, that the device was one which had been seriously thought of here.

I was confirmed in this belief when I called upon M. Hartsen, by appointment, on Saturday last. His Excellency had the day before written me a private line to say that he had received a visit from Mr. Fox, who had talked to him on the Congo question, and that he would be glad to tell me what had passed at the interview. I explained to M. Hartsen that I had nothing to do with Mr. Fox's visit to him, which had, indeed, been made at Count Bylandt's recommendation. Mr. Fox, however, represented an influential philanthropic Association, which reflected the views of an important section of the British public, and I was not sorry, therefore, that he should have had an opportunity of conversing with him. M. Hartsen to a great extent confirmed what Mr. Fox had reported to me, that an idea had suggested itself here that adequate resources might be provided for the Congo State, partly out of an enhanced tax on spirits, and partly out of a duty on exports. He was evidently afraid, however, of the officious interference of Mr. Fox, and was anxious to impress upon me that he had not entered into anything like a serious discussion with that gentleman.

On my part, I explained very clearly to M. Hartsen that Mr. Fox had no authority to speak for any one but himself, or, at most, the philanthropic Association to which he belonged.

It may, nevertheless, be of interest to your Lordship to know, that a higher taxation of spirits has commended itself to those interested in the Dutch Congo trade as one of the means which might be adopted for meeting the requirements of the Congo State, and at the same time extricating the Netherland Government from the awkward position in which they find themselves placed. The temperance party is not without influence in this country; and there exists, I believe, a certain soreness at the very unedifying part which Holland has been made to play in the discussions on the liquor trade.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 52.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 14.)

(No. 23. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, August 11, 1890.

DURING his stay here, Mr. Francis W. Fox had interviews with the principal persons interested in the Rotterdam Trading Company, of which he gave me some account.

[809]

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The gentlemen whom he saw were, of course, bound to make out the best case they could for the Company, but in doing so, they appear to have passed very severe strictures on the Administration of the Congo, and on the malpractices of its employés.

M. Greshoff, who represents the interests of the Dutch Company at Stanley Pool, and whom Mr. Fox described to me as an intimate friend of Mr. Stanley, laid charges against the local officials at Stanley Pool which were very little short of a direct participation in the Slave Trade.

From M. Schalkwijk, too, who has succeeded M. Müller as Chairman of the Company, Mr. Fox states that he heard a very similar tale, coupled with the complaints which have already been made public, of an attempt for securing to the Administration, by arbitrary methods, a monopoly of the more lucrative articles of trade, and notably of ivory.

There can be no manner of doubt that these scandals, if they really exist, are unknown at Brussels; but it is, I think, to be feared that, owing to the heated atmosphere which has arisen out of the unpleasant controversy over the import duties, mutual recriminations may arise in the press of both countries, which will be very injurious to the good relations between the two Governments.

Mr. Fox, not that I should consider his opinion of much value, was evidently much impressed by the statements made to him on the Dutch side, and somewhat shaken in the views he brought with him here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 53.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 19.)

(No. 24. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, August 18, 1890.

WITH reference to Lord Vivian's despatch to your Lordship No. 229, Slave Trade Conference, of the 9th instant, of which your Lordship has done me the honour of sending me a copy, I would beg to observe that, as far as I can gather, there exists little disposition on the part of the Netherlands Government to cause themselves to be represented on the Technical Commission appointed to arrange the Tariff of import duties to be established in the conventional basin of the Congo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 54.

Leeds Chamber of Commerce to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 19.)

My Lord,

Leeds, August 18, 1890.

I AM instructed by the Council of this Chamber to support the Memorial of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, dated the 26th June last, with reference to the duty on goods imported into the Congo Territories, and to ask respectfully that your Lordship will not consent to the imposition of an import or transit duty upon the merchandize passing into and through the regions of the Congo until at least the time named in the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 1885 has elapsed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RHODES K. CALVERT, *Secretary.*

No. 55.

Colonel Euan-Smith to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 20.)

(No. 227. Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Zanzibar, August 20, 1890, 9.55 P.M.

THE question of his probable future financial position is occupying the Sultan's careful attention, and he is very anxious to know whether the increase to 10 per cent. of

Mr. Fox to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 18.)

My Lord,

14, Dean's Yard, Westminster, August 15, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to submit to your Lordship a Report of an unofficial visit which I have recently paid to the Hague and to Brussels, for the purpose of ascertaining upon what terms and conditions the Dutch Government would agree to sign the General Act of the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference, when I had the opportunity of several interviews at the Hague with his Excellency Herr Hartsen, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Herr Van der Staal van Piershil, of the Netherlands Foreign Office, Herr W. C. Schalkwyk, the Managing Director of the Dutch Congo Trading Company, and others, and at Brussels with his Excellency Baron Lambertmont.

As the result of these interviews, I have the pleasure to report that the authorities at the Hague intimated to me that the Dutch Government is not only willing to facilitate in every possible way the humanitarian aims and purposes of the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference, but it is most desirous of cordially co-operating with Great Britain to promote the restriction of the trade in spirits and fire-arms, and it also recognizes the need of the Congo Free State having sources of revenue placed at its disposal to provide fair and reasonable costs and charges of administration, as well as the extra special cost and charges which will be involved in carrying into operation the Resolutions adopted by the Brussels Conference for the suppression of the Slave Trade, and the restriction and prohibition of the sale of alcoholic liquors.

It was further intimated to me that the Dutch Government (if invited by your Lordship) will probably be prepared to sign a declaration agreeing to the imposition of an increased duty on all alcoholic liquors imported into the Congo Basin, so that the estimated revenue realized from the duty levied on spirits shall be approximately equivalent to the total revenue that would be realized from the proposed duty of 10 per cent. on imports.

Thus, for example, assuming the present value of alcoholic liquors imported into the Congo Basin is represented by about one-seventh of the total value of the gross imports, the Dutch Government will probably agree to an import duty on spirits of, say, 70 per cent.

I suppose the Dutch authorities may contend that a duty of 15 fr. per hectolitre is equivalent to 100 per cent. upon the cost value of the class of spirits as imported into the Congo Basin. But taking into consideration the fact that the relative proportion of spirits imported may, it is hoped, be greatly diminished by the restriction proposed to be imposed under the Articles of the Brussels General Act, and also to give practical proof of its desire to carry out the views of your Lordship and Great Britain the Dutch Government will probably assent to the imposition of a duty of 50 fr. per hectolitre on all alcoholic liquors up to 50 degrees of proof spirits, with a proviso that this duty may be increased at the end of six years from the date of coming into force of the Act, if by experience it is found that the said duty is not sufficiently heavy to effectually restrict the trade.

But, in agreeing to this proposed increase of the duty on spirits, the Dutch Government will stipulate that the Declaration abrogating Article IV of the Berlin Congo Treaty relating to free trade in imports shall be withdrawn, as it declines to sign that Declaration.

With respect to exports, the Dutch Government is prepared to assent to such an amount of duty levied on all exports as shall be sufficient, together with the receipts from the duty on alcoholic liquors and from other sources of revenue that the Congo State will have at its command, to provide for the fair and reasonable expenses of administration, but the Dutch Government will stipulate that the export duties shall be adjusted so as not to strangle and destroy the trade and the development of the commercial resources of the Congo State.

The Dutch authorities point out that whilst the articles of export are few in number, the duty on these can be easily and cheaply collected at the port of shipment; on the other hand, the articles of import are so numerous and their value so difficult to estimate owing to the special and peculiar circumstances attending the Congo trade, which are further complicated by goods imported being destined not only for the Congo Free State, but for the French and Portuguese territories in the Congo Basin, that the levying of the proposed duties are so intricate and difficult that the expenses of

collection will possibly be greater than the revenue to be derived from the import duty.

The Managing Director of the Dutch Congo Trading Company informs me that whereas 50 per cent. of the value of his Company's imports into the Congo Basin are cotton goods, and these are principally Manchester goods, spirits only represent about one-seventh of the gross value, that therefore it is greatly to the interest of Great Britain that no restrictive or vexatious duties should be levied upon the import trade with the Congo Basin. He also desires it to be known that the trading operations of his Dutch Company represents about three-fourths of the gross trade of the Congo Basin, and that it carried on trade with Congo for a long period before the Congo Free State was established.

At Brussels I had the advantage of an interview on Monday, the 11th August, with his Excellency Baron Lambermont, when I had the opportunity of informing his Excellency that the Dutch Government is disposed to sign at once the General Act of the Conference, and to agree to certain proposals as referred to above.

Baron Lambermont appeared disposed to favourably consider the new proposals, especially if these were approved by your Lordship.

In conclusion, I would therefore beg to submit the following suggestions:—

1. That your Lordship should dispatch a communication to the Hague to his Excellency the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs in the nature of an inquiry as to whether the Netherlands Government is willing to agree that a duty of 50 fr. per hectolitre shall be levied on all alcoholic liquors up to 50 degrees proof spirits during the first six years, and at the end of that period to be increased, if found advisable, by mutual consent to 200 fr. per hectolitre.

2. That no other import duties shall be levied.

3. That fair and reasonable duties shall be levied on all exports, and that the amount of these shall be referred for consideration to a Committee of Experts, on which Great Britain and Holland would be represented.

4. That a declaration embodying the above conditions should be signed simultaneously to the signing of the General Act of the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference in lieu of the declaration abrogating clause 4 of the Berlin Congo Treaty.

And, lastly, I would venture to point out to your Lordship the far-reaching importance of Great Britain and Holland being represented on the Committee of Experts, before which the amount of duties on exports to be levied shall from time to time be considered as in connection with the question of the amount of duties to be levied will be brought into review and discussion, the costs and the details of the measures necessary and appropriate for the suppression of the Slave and Spirits Trades in the Congo Basin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS WILLIAM FOX.

import duties into Zanzibar territories, and special measures regarding spirits, which were stated as probable by Sir John Kirk in his private letter to His Highness, of which copy was inclosed in my despatch No. 274 of this year, are likely to be realized. Would your Lordship kindly supply me with information to guide my answer to the Sultan, for the French Consul here, who was also a Delegate at the Conference, describes Sir John Kirk's statements as entirely erroneous?

No. 56.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 25.)

(No. 25. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, August 20, 1890.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatch No. 24, Africa, I have the honour to report that I learn from the Belgian Minister, Baron d'Anethan, that although the Government here show no signs of receding from the position they have assumed in regard to the proposed import duties in the Congo State, their Envoy at Brussels, Baron de Gericke, seems to have allowed it to appear in conversation with one of his colleagues (the French Minister, I believe) that he fully expected that the Netherlands would take part in the Technical Commission about to assemble.

The colleague to whom Baron de Gericke imparted this belief seems to have retorted that he was not so sure that the Netherlands Government would be allowed a chance of joining the Commission in question.

Baron d'Anethan again spoke to me with concern of the unfavourable effect which this affair of the Congo duties has produced on the feeling between the two countries. The Dutch, he said, are very bitter against the Belgians, and while maliciously rejoicing over the difficulties they have now to deal with in the Congo, point out that it only serves them right. If they had not chosen to break away from this country they would now have colonial trade and possessions in plenty.

According to my Belgian colleague, it would be necessary to go back to some twenty years ago for such mutual ill-will as now shows itself both here and in Belgium.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 57.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 25.)

(No. 27. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, August 22, 1890.

ALTHOUGH the matter is of secondary and purely retrospective interest, I may as well mention that, according to the Italian Minister here, M. Crispi was incorrectly informed as to the line taken by Holland in the affair of the claim of Italy to represent the Emperor of Abyssinia at the Brussels Conference. M. Crispi had been given to understand that Holland had at first admitted that claim, but that afterwards, on the representation, it was said, of France and Russia, it had turned round and opposed it.

The Marquis Spinola was thereupon commissioned to press the Government here to abandon their opposition, and return to the line they had at first taken. In carrying out this instruction he learned from M. Hartsen that it was a complete mistake to suppose that the Dutch Government had altered their mind in this question; from the very first they had opposed the claim put forward by Italy. The Marquis Spinola argued from this that M. Crispi was not well served by some of his Agents, notwithstanding the promotion he bestowed upon them. M. Catalani, recently appointed Envoy at Copenhagen, is, no doubt, the Agent to whom my colleague referred.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 58.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 25.)

(No. 232. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, August 23, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT, having learnt from Baron Solvyns that the Protocols of the Brussels Conference have been laid in dummy before Parliament and have thus become public property proposes to commence his campaign against Holland, and, as his first move, he intends to furnish the press with a statement, which he has himself supervised, founded on the Protocols, giving an accurate version of the question in dispute with Holland which has been greatly misrepresented in the Dutch press and in some English newspapers.

He hopes that this temperate statement of facts will have a good effect in correcting misapprehensions, and it will be his earnest endeavour to remove the existing feeling of irritation against Belgium.

He does not despair of prevailing on the Netherlands Government to agree to the establishment of import duties in the Congo within the limits laid down by the Conference in return for some equivalent concession, and he is anxious that Holland should be represented on the Technical Commission, for which he is now engaged in preparing the programme.

He is informed that neither the British nor French Ministers at the Hague have as yet been instructed by their respective Governments to bring any pressure to bear on the Netherlands Government, while it has been reported to him that the Italian and Russian Ministers, whose Governments warmly supported in Conference the proposal to establish import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo, have rather encouraged the Dutch Government in their resistance. He has written to ask for explanations of this apparent change of front.

When matters are in a shape which will admit of substantive proposals being made to the Netherlands Government, he hopes that Her Majesty's Minister at the Hague will be authorized to support them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 59.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Colonel Euan-Smith.

(No. 95.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, August 25, 1890, 4.30 P.M.

I HAVE received your telegram No. 227 of the 20th instant.

Any points in Sir J. Kirk's letters which the Sultan does not understand, Sir J. Kirk should himself explain, in his capacity of His Highness' Representative at the Brussels Conference.

Your telegram has been referred to Sir John, and this course has been suggested to him.

No. 60.

Foreign Office to Leeds Chamber of Commerce.

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 26, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th instant, deprecating the imposition of import or transit duties upon merchandise passing into and through the regions of the Congo until the time named in the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 1885 shall have elapsed.

In reply, I am to state, for the information of your Chamber, that His Majesty the King of the Belgians having declared his inability to carry out the Resolutions of the Brussels Slave Trade Conference unless he was allowed to impose import duties, and the Powers having declared that the General Act of the Conference containing the provisions for the suppression of the Slave Trade would not be signed by them without the Financial

Declaration, Her Majesty's Government have agreed to a modification of the engagements by which such duties were prohibited, on the understanding that the Tariff conditions to be established should form the subject of negotiation.

I am, &c.
(Signed) P. CURRIE.

No. 61.

Foreign Office to Mr. Fox.

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 27, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, respecting the views entertained by the Netherlands Government with regard to the signing by them of the General Act of the Brussels Conference.

I am, &c.
(Signed) P. CURRIE.

No. 62.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 8.)

(No. 29. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, September 4, 1890.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs has left the Hague on a few weeks' leave of absence. The day before his departure he met the Belgian Minister at dinner at Scheveningen, and a few words which he let fall led my colleague to infer that he is much exercised by the question of the Congo import duties. Although he did not show any signs of yielding on the point, and indeed reaffirmed his contention that the Brussels Conference was not competent to revise any portion of the Act of Berlin, he expressed an earnest desire that some way might be found out of the difficulty, concluding by saying that where real good-will existed, and such was not wanting on the part of the Netherlands Government, agreement must surely be attainable.

Baron d'Anethan concurs with me in thinking that the Netherlands Government would be sincerely obliged to any one who would help to extricate them out of their awkward position, and he considers that the way out of that position should be left as open for them as possible. I asked him whether the idea that had suggested itself to Baron Lambermont, as reported in Lord Vivian's despatch No. 219 of the 18th July to your Lordship, that the Dutch Government should be invited to take part in the Technical Commission, would not afford a means of satisfying them on one point, by giving them, namely, the opportunity which they complain has been denied them, of studying the best method of creating additional resources—which they themselves profess to admit are indispensable—for the Congo State. Baron d'Anethan said that such was no doubt the aim of this proposal, but he thought, and I agree with him, that it would not be good policy to invite the Dutch to join the Commission unless one was well assured beforehand of their readiness to do so.

To me it almost seems as if there were but two methods of dealing with the Dutch Government: either to give way to them by calling together a Conference having for its express object the revision of the Act of Berlin, a course which I can scarcely think would commend itself to the Powers, or to treat them as contumacious, and at the expiration of the delay which has been granted them, to *passer outre* and carry out the decisions of the Brussels Conference without any regard for their dissent.

Unfortunately there is no doubt that the longer the controversy is kept open the less easy it will be to arrive at a settlement of it. Signs are already discernible that, by an adroit transition the issue has been shifted here from the lower ground of purely commercial interests to that of the sanctity of Treaties, and the immorality of coercion as applied to a weak Power.

By taking their stand on such ground as this the Netherlands Government might indeed, it appears to me, hope to raise up a party in its favour in the Conference itself. I have already noticed a tendency on the part of both my Russian and my French colleagues to sympathize with them in the stand they are making. On the same ground, too, however fallacious and insincere may be their line of argument, they are certain to be

supported by the body of public opinion in this country, which at the first was indifferent to the question, but now gives indications of taking it up from a national stand-point.

All these considerations surely make it desirable to put a speedy end to the difference if possible. As at present conducted here, the discussion might lead to the grotesque result of enabling the Dutch Government, while simply obeying the behests of a close-fisted mercantile Corporation, to posture as the only respecters of solemn engagements in the face of a Treaty-breaking Europe.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 63.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 8.)

(No. 233. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, September 5, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copies of an article, probably officially inspired, which appeared in the "*Indépendance Belge*" of yesterday, replying to the arguments employed by the Netherlands Government to justify their refusal to agree to the establishment of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo.

The opinion entertained here is that the resistance of the Netherlands Government on this point has become a question of *amour-propre*, and that they are encouraged to persist in it by the attitude of the Powers, which they mistake for indifference.

That it is therefore necessary to undeceive them, seeing that in view of the formal declaration repeatedly made by the Government of the Congo State, that its financial position would not admit of its undertaking the obligations imposed on it by the General Act without the resources which the new import duties would furnish, the persistence of the Netherlands Government in their present attitude will jeopardize the whole result of the labours of the Brussels Conference.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 63.

Extract from the "Indépendance Belge" of September 4, 1890.

CONGO BELGE.—LA TRAITE ET LES DROITS D'ENTRÉE.—Le recueil des Actes de la Conférence Antiesclavagiste vient d'être livré à la publicité, avec toute une série de pièces d'où émerge, vraiment sinistre, le tableau du trafic humain qu'il s'agissait de combattre.

Cela forme deux volumes considérables qui, pourtant, ne donnent pas encore une idée complète du vaste travail accompli en sept mois par l'Europe réunie à Bruxelles, car la relation résumée des séances décisives de la Conférence Plénière y figure seule, et les longues études et discussions des Commissions, des "veillées de laboratoire" en sont omises. Tout compte fait, les sept mois de ce labeur diplomatique apparaîtront plus tard comme une minute en proportion des résultats atteints, quand les mesures décidées par la Conférence auront fait cesser le sacrifice des 400,000 existences que la Traite enlève chaque année à l'Afrique, d'après les plus modérées des évaluations officielles.

Un doute douloureux subsiste, néanmoins. Les mesures prescrites par la Conférence seront-elles appliquées? Toutes ces belles résolutions qui semblent ennoblir le papier même sur lequel on les a transcrites, seraient-elles condamnées à rester sur le papier et à tenir la place d'un roman ou d'un rêve dans les archives des Chancelleries? Cette question est permise. On sait que l'État du Congo, géographiquement placé en plein foyer de la Traite, appelé par conséquent à jouer le rôle principal dans la lutte contre la chasse à l'homme, s'est déclaré hors d'état de s'acquitter de cette coûteuse mission, si on ne lui en fournissait pas les moyens, en revisant l'Article du Traité de Berlin qui interdit toute perception de droit d'entrée dans le bassin du Congo. On sait aussi que le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas, ému des réclamations du commerce Néerlandais-Africain, a refusé d'accéder à cette condition *sine quâ non* de la guerre à l'esclavagisme. Des six mois de réflexion accordés au Cabinet de La Haye pour se raviser et signer l'Acte Général de la Conférence deux sont écoulés; et nous ne sachions pas qu'il ait encore fait mine, le moins du monde, de changer d'avis. Qu'il persiste et l'hécatombe annuelle de 400,000 Africains

se perpétuera. Les documents de la Conférence resteront ce qu'ils sont : une preuve officielle des élans de générosité du concert Européen et de son impuissance devant une seule volonté discordante. Il n'y aura rien de fait.

Nous l'avons lu avec quelque soin, ce gros recueil, et il nous a fourni ou suggéré plus d'une idée à mettre en regard des arguments dont s'étaye l'opposition des Pays-Bas à l'introduction des droits d'entrée dans le Bassin du Congo.

Un des scrupules de la Hollande lui est venu de cette idée que la Conférence de Bruxelles était incompétente pour aborder la question des droits d'entrée au Congo. Les Plénipotentiaires Hollandais oubliaient qu'ils venaient de reconnaître la compétence de l'aréopage Européenne en cette matière, en autorisant des droits d'entrée sur une des principales marchandises importées : sur les alcools.

On nous objectera que la question des spiritueux faisait exception, se rattachant directement à la question de la Traite, puisque l'abrutissement des nègres par l'eau-de-vie est une des circonstances qui facilitent leur rapt. Fort bien. Mais du moment où l'État du Congo, qui doit être le principal préposé à la croisade antiesclavagiste, vient dire : "Je ne pourrai remplir ma tâche, si vous n'étendez pas à tous les produits importés le principe concédé pour les spiritueux," la question générale des droits d'entrée n'était-elle pas tout aussi intimement liée que celle des spiritueux à la solution du problème de la Traite ? Et cela, l'État du Congo l'a dit et nettement dit. Les pièces officielles de la Conférence révèlent ce fait peu connu que les Plénipotentiaires de l'État libre avaient reçu l'ordre formel de ne pas signer l'Acte Général, de formuler un loyal *non possumus*, pour le cas où l'instrument diplomatique, qui imposait à leur Gouvernement un ensemble de mesures très dispendieuses (1,200,000 fr. par an, au bas mot), ne le mettait pas, du même coup, en état d'y faire face, par la ressource des droits d'entrée.

On a parlé de surprise, en Hollande. Pourquoi la Conférence a-t-elle été saisie *in extremis* du projet de droits d'entrée ? On prévient les gens, au moins, on les prépare quand on a de pareilles intentions.

Nous avouerons qu'à ce reproche nous ne comprenons rien. L'État du Congo devait-il mettre la charrue avant les bœufs, et demander à l'Europe de l'armer pécuniairement pour exécuter ses décisions avant que ces décisions ne fussent prises et qu'il fût possible d'en évaluer le coût ? Au surplus, comment admettre que les Plénipotentiaires Hollandais aient ignoré l'inévitable mise en discussion des "voies et moyens" après l'élaboration des mesures antiesclavagistes, quand, au dehors même de la Conférence, c'était le secret de Polichinelle que, une fois le plan de campagne tracé, il en faudrait assurer l'exécution en créant des ressources nouvelles aux États insuffisamment pourvus ? Qu'on relise à La Haye les articles publiés, dès les premières heures de la Conférence, par "l'Indépendance Belge," par M. Émile de Laveleye, dans "La Gazette," par M. Chailley, dans "Le Journal des Débats ;" on verra si la chose n'était pas de notoriété publique, comme elle était dans la rigoureuse logique des causes et effets. Et c'est faire injure à la perspicacité de la diplomatie Néerlandaise d'imaginer qu'elle seule ne prévoyait pas l'inévitable, quand, au surplus, les termes mêmes de convocation de la Conférence lui laissaient la latitude de tout traiter, de tout aborder, hormis les questions de propriété territoriale.

Ce reproche de "tardivité" ne vaut réellement pas qu'on y insiste. Et il faut glisser de même sur les griefs d'amour-propre national articulés par la presse Hollandaise. Que celle-ci lise avec le même soin que nous les recueils officiels et qu'elle nous dise quand la diplomatie Européenne a manqué un instant d'égards envers les Plénipotentiaires Hollandais ? Tenue tout entière en échec par l'opposition des Pays-Bas aux droits d'entrée, elle n'en a pas moins fait preuve jusqu'au bout d'une courtoisie inaltérable, d'une politesse que nous qualifierions d'angélique si nous étions sûrs de ne pas nous mettre à dos les Talleyrand contemporains, en leur attribuant les candides vertus extra-humaines. Et quand il serait vrai qu'une ou deux petites feuilles Bruxelloises, d'importance toute locale, eussent apprécié avec moins de sang-froid l'attitude des Pays-Bas, en quoi cela engagerait-il la nation Belge, ou l'État du Congo, et en quoi ces écarts de langage, désavoués chaque jour par le resserrement de plus en plus étroit de nos bons rapports avec le peuple Néerlandais, justifieraient-ils l'opposition de celui-ci à une grande œuvre internationale qui met en cause l'honneur et l'intérêt de l'humanité tout entière ? Ces pauvres Noirs ! C'est à leurs dépens que la Hollande songerait à venger des susceptibilités qui n'ont pas même leur raison d'être ? Ils auraient bon dos !

Quand les Pays-Bas nous parlent de leurs intérêts commerciaux menacés par le projet de droits d'entrée, à la bonne heure ! Si cet argument n'est pas des plus généreux, quand il s'agit de sauver 400,000 existences par an, il est du moins plus sérieux. Mais encore ! Résistera-t-il plus que les autres à l'examen ? Nous n'en sommes pas persuadés. Faut-il le dire ? Les Pays-Bas, qui ne possèdent pas un pouce de territoire-

au Congo, nous semblent même mal venus à se prétendre seuls intéressés dans la question du régime économique à établir dans le bassin. On range, il est vrai, en bataille une armée de chiffres chargée de prouver que la Hollande fait à elle seule les sept huitièmes du commerce du Congo. Mais on perd de vue un *distinguo* bien important. Ces chiffres, d'ailleurs discutables, portent principalement sur le commerce d'exportation. Et ce commerce-là est hors de cause, puisque c'est uniquement la marchandise importée qu'il s'agit de grever. A l'égard du mouvement des importations les Pays Bas sont-ils bien sûrs de tenir la corde, d'avoir acquis au Congo la suprématie d'intérêt qu'ils revendiquent ? En ce cas, leurs statisticiens pourraient bien se préparer à une désillusion. Pour ne parler que des importations Belges, elles ont grossi en ces derniers temps dans des proportions insoupçonnées. Peut-être serons-nous prochainement en état de démontrer qu'elles sont près d'égaliser, sinon de dépasser, le chiffre des importations Hollandaises, car nos statisticiens travaillent eux aussi. Et pourtant nous voyons la Belgique se déclarer prête, sans une hésitation, à accepter ces droits d'entrée qui doivent être opposés au droit d'assassinat, de pillage, de rapt, de dévastation de l'Afrique par les Arabes. Que nos voisins y songent bien. Ce n'est assurément pas un tel contraste qu'ils veulent susciter entre deux pays de même famille, également dignes de l'estime Européenne, et également soucieux de la conserver.

En principe, rien de plus plausible, avouons-le, que la crainte exprimée par les Pays-Bas touchant les conséquences possibles des formalités Douanières qu'entraînera l'imposition de droits d'entrée au Congo. En cet instant même, l'émoi de l'Europe en face du Bill McKinley, Américain, atteste que le commerce et l'industrie ont souvent lieu de s'alarmer des formalités vexatoires de la Douane plus vivement encore que des droits mêmes. Ces déclarations, ces inspections auxquelles on soumet les marchandises passibles de la taxe sont les mille petits liens avec lesquels les Liliputiens réduisaient Gulliver à l'importance. Elles arrêtent et paralysent parfois les échanges plus efficacement que ne pourrait le faire le tarif le plus protectionniste du monde. Là-dessus, nous sommes d'accord. Mais les barrières que l'Amérique oppose intentionnellement et de parti pris aux importations de marchandises étrangères sur son territoire, les États du Bassin du Congo ont-ils songé un instant à les élever chez eux ? Ne sont-ce pas ses propres produits que l'Europe introduit dans ses possessions Africaines, et notre intérêt à tous n'est-il pas d'éviter comme le suicide, toute mesure susceptible d'en arrêter ou simplement d'en ralentir l'écoulement vers ces canaux que nous nous sommes ouverts tout exprès pour eux ?

Il saute aux yeux que, sous peine d'oublier tout ce qu'ils se doivent à eux-mêmes, les États du Congo seront tenus d'établir le mode de contrôle Douanier le moins complexe, le moins coûteux et le plus expéditif possible. Or, c'est précisément à quoi la Conférence a pourvu—qu'on réalise plutôt le recueil de ses débats. Il a été expressément convenu que le mode d'application des droits d'entrée ferait l'objet "d'une négociation ultérieure," où l'on s'inspirerait précisément des intérêts généraux du commerce international, de façon à réduire les formalités Douanières à leur plus simple expression, et à empêcher que de simples droits fiscaux prélevés pour les besoins sacrés de la croisade antiesclavagiste ne devinssent des entraves pour le commerce. Et si nous sommes bien renseignés, ces prescriptions de la Conférence ne tarderont pas à recevoir leur application pratique. Une Commission Internationale de spécialistes se réunira dans ce but à Bruxelles dans quelques semaines. On peut compter qu'elle s'attachera avant tout à simplifier les formalités Douanières. Mieux que cela : elle sera armée pour exempter au besoin des droits d'entrée les marchandises d'un contrôle difficile, voire pour accorder un traitement de faveur à certains produits que le maximum de 10 pour cent pourrait frapper de façon à en compromettre l'écoulement, car a-t-on oublié à La Haye, que ce maximum n'a jamais été proposé comme loi rigoureuse et absolue, destinée à s'appliquer sans distinction à tous les objets importés ; a-t-on oublié que dès la présentation même du projet à la Conférence, des exemptions ont été spontanément promises à certaines catégories d'articles : navires, machines à vapeur, appareils agricoles ou industriels, locomotives et voitures de chemins de fer, instruments de science et de précision ?

Que le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas s'applique à tirer, au point de vue de son commerce national, le meilleur parti possible de ces dispositions conciliantes et transactionnelles, affirmées dès la première heure. Il ne tardera pas à voir tomber ses dernières objections aux droits d'entrée. Du moins celles de ces objections qui se fondent exclusivement sur les intérêts matériels.

Il en reste une—une objection de droit et de sentiment—qu'on devrait pouvoir lever tout aussi aisément. Abstraction faite de la question de savoir si la Conférence de Bruxelles était compétente pour reviser le Traité de Berlin—question affirmativement résolue par l'avis général—il a paru au Gouvernement Néerlandais que s'il ne restait en Europe qu'un seul défenseur de l'intégrité et de l'immuabilité des Traités, il devait être

celui-là. L'Article IV du Traité de Berlin interdit tout droit d'entrée au Congo avant l'expiration d'un délai de vingt ans—dont le tiers, soit dit en passant, est déjà écoulé. Nos voisins estiment qu'ils doivent donner l'exemple du respect des engagements internationaux, puisque toute l'Europe s'est trouvée d'accord pour l'oublier.

C'est à une pensée de haute morale qu'il obéit. Mais si elle fait grand honneur à sa conscience, elle en fait moins à sa mémoire. Moyennant un peu plus de réflexion, le Gouvernement Néerlandais reconnaîtrait que s'il s'était agi de défendre contre un attentat l'esprit du Traité de Berlin il ne se serait pas trouvé tout seul en Europe pour jouer cet honorable rôle. En réalité, c'est la Néerlande qui, sans le vouloir, en visant, même de la meilleure foi du monde le résultat opposé, est en train de manquer de respect à la solennelle Convention de 1885. Elle se rappelle et défend l'Article IV qui proscriit les droits d'entrée pour une période provisoire de vingt ans. Elle oublie l'Article V ainsi conçu :—

“Toutes les Puissances exerçant les droits de souveraineté ou une influence dans les dits territoires s'engagent à veiller à la conservation des populations indigènes et à l'amélioration de leurs conditions morales et matérielles d'existence, et à concourir à la suppression de l'esclavage et surtout de la Traite des Noirs.”

Et elle oublie l'Article IX, que voici :—

“Conformément aux principes du droit des gens, tels qu'ils sont reconnus par les Puissances Signataires, la Traite des Esclaves étant interdite, et les opérations qui, sur terre ou sur mer, fournissent les esclaves à la Traite devant être également considérées comme interdites, les Puissances qui exercent des droits de souveraineté ou une influence dans les territoires formant le bassin conventionnel du Congo, déclarent que ces territoires ne pourront servir ni de marché, ni de voie de transit pour la Traite des Esclaves. Chacune de ces Puissances s'engage à employer tous les moyens en son pouvoir pour mettre fin à ce commerce et pour punir ceux qui s'en occupent.”

Qui donc, après la lecture de ces deux Articles, pourra prétendre qu'en revisant la clause provisoire du Traité de Berlin relative aux droits d'entrée, l'Europe violerait le pacte qu'elle a conclu? N'apparaît-il pas, au contraire, qu'elle serait en train de donner aux clauses *permanentes* du Traité la sanction même qui leur manquait, d'écarter l'unique obstacle qui existait à l'application sérieuse et loyale de cet engagement des nations, en un mot de vivifier ce qu'il y a de plus sacré et de plus immuable dans le Traité de Berlin par la révision d'une de ses clauses les plus transitoires? Qu'on nous pardonne cette image: quand nous entendons les Pays-Bas défendre l'Article IV du Traité de Berlin contre les Articles V et IX, il nous semble assister aux hésitations d'un chirurgien qui, par humanité, laisserait mourir son patient plutôt que d'amputer une jambe malade. Le Gouvernement Néerlandais reconnaîtra qu'il s'est trompé; et qu'il faut couper l'Article IV du Traité de Berlin pour assurer la force et la vie au Traité même.

Et dès lors il n'aura plus à opter qu'entre deux intérêts: quelques centaines de mille francs de droits d'entrée à payer annuellement par le commerce d'importation au Congo ou 400,000 existences de Noirs à sauver dans le même temps. On voudrait n'avoir plus à douter de son choix. On voudrait même, dans l'intérêt de ses propres satisfactions de conscience, qu'il choisisse vite. Quatre cent mille existences par an, cela fait plus de mille victimes par jour. Et les jours s'écoulent. Les Puissances qui ont adhéré sans réserves et sans retard aux décisions de la Conférence de Berlin savaient la valeur de ce vieil adage, “Bis dat qui cito dat.”

No. 64.

Messrs. Hatton and Cookson to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 10.)

My Lord,

3, Mersey Street, Liverpool, September 8, 1890.

WE have been for many years engaged in the trade of the River Congo, South-west Africa, and have imported therefrom large quantities of ivory and rubber, and hence are deeply interested in all that may affect that commerce. A very serious detriment is now threatened to it by the Decree of the Government of the Congo Free State to levy a duty on ivory and rubber from and after the 1st October, 1890. The standard proposed will seriously imperil, if it does not altogether stop, our trade and that of all British merchants in the district.

In support of this statement we point to the scale, which is as follows:—

On ivory, 200 fr. per 100 kilog.; on rubber, 50 fr. per 100 kilog.

In ivory the duty on small-sized teeth will amount to from 20 to 30 per cent. on the value here.

[809]

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We will be obliged if your Lordship will cause inquiry to be made into this matter, as being contrary to the Act of the Berlin Conference, and against the spirit of the revision thereof.

We are, &c.
(Signed) HATTON AND COOKSON.

No. 65.

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 10.)

My Lord, 55, New Broad Street, London, September 9, 1890.

I AM directed by the Committee of this Society to ask your Lordship to be good enough to forward the inclosed copy of a Resolution, passed by them at their meeting on the 5th instant, to Her Majesty's Representative at the Hague, with a view to its being communicated to the Government of His Majesty the King of the Netherlands.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHAS. H. ALLEN, *Secretary*.

Inclosure in No. 65.

Resolution passed at a Meeting of the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, held this day.

Resolved,—That the Committee of this Society, whilst rejoicing in the success which has in many vital points been achieved by the Anti-Slavery Conference at Brussels in grappling with the question of the suppression of slavery and the Slave Trade, trusts that the Government of the Netherlands will consent to withdraw its opposition to the completion of the work and authorize its Representative to affix his signature to the Declaration appended to the General Act. The present attitude of that Government, threatening as it does to overthrow the beneficent action upon which all the other civilized Powers are agreed, would, if continued in, inflict great evil upon the natives of a whole continent, and virtually destroy the work for which the Conference was convened.

By order of the Committee,
(Signed) CHAS. H. ALLEN, *Secretary*.

55, New Broad Street, London, September 5, 1890.

No. 66.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 11.)

(No. 30. Africa.)

My Lord, The Hague, September 10, 1890.

LORD VIVIAN, in his despatch No. 232, Africa, of the 23rd ultimo, to your Lordship, a copy of which your Lordship did me the honour to communicate to me, refers to Baron Lambermont's intention "to furnish the press with a statement, which he has himself supervised, founded on the Protocols, giving an accurate version of the question in dispute with Holland," and I presume, therefore, that an article in the "Indépendance Belge," of which I inclose a copy (although it has, no doubt, reached your Lordship more directly), may be taken to convey the views which his Excellency wishes to make known.

The controversy thus opened has now been followed up by the "Dagblad" of the 7th instant, in an article of which I likewise forward a translation, and which no doubt accurately reflects the opinions held here on the subject of the proposed import duties in the Congo State.

I take this opportunity of also inclosing a sheet which has been sent to me, and, as far as I know, to all my colleagues, from Rotterdam, embodying extracts from the Protocols of the Berlin Conference, 1884-85, the object of which is to show how completely

the principle of entire freedom from import and transit duties was recognized at that Conference. This reprint, which is full of mistakes and has been very carelessly revised, no doubt emanates from the Dutch African Trading Company.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 66.

Extract from the "Indépendance Belge" of September 4, 1890.

[See Inclosure 1 in No. 63.]

Inclosure 2 in No. 66.

Extract from the "Dagblad" of September 7, 1890.

(Translation.)

IF we are to believe the "Indépendance," the Netherlands has to choose between paying annually a few hundred thousand francs in duties or sacrificing in the same time 400,000 negroes. The Netherlands prevent the carrying out of the Anti-Slavery Convention by refusing to co-operate in the revision of the Berlin Decrees so far as regards its consent to the levying of import duties on merchandize.

In truth, however, everything laid to the charge of the Netherlands recoils on the "État," which made its signature to the general Convention dependent on the levying of import duties. The Netherlands refused to agree to those duties, for reasons which no one has as yet refuted; the Netherlands suggested the means of augmenting the revenue of the "État," without throwing the burden on other people's shoulders.

The objections to import duties on the Congo have been set forth at full length in a pamphlet of "Een Koopman;" what was said in it was never contradicted. On the contrary, the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, French and Portuguese merchants, missionaries, and many others besides, not organs of the Netherlands, have testified their entire agreement with that pamphlet. The "Indépendance" itself admits all the difficulties of fiscal provisions.

The "Indépendance" still appears to have no correct conception of the condition of the Congo; it constantly forgets that the trade in the Congo Territory is exclusively one of barter. From the nature of the case, therefore, what is imported into that territory must represent a less value than what is exported; the merchant who sent goods of greater value than those he took in return would lose money.

The "Indépendance" cites spirits as one of the principal articles imported. That, also, is incorrect. Among the articles imported into the Congo State, spirits constitute only about one-sixth of the whole imports; by far the largest portion consists of textile manufactures.

The "Indépendance" wants also to make it doubtful if the commercial interests of the Netherlands are so important as they are represented to be. It says that the Returns issued are open to dispute, but it seems also to overlook the fact that these were copied from the official Returns in the "Bulletin officiel" of the "État Indépendant" itself. The journal adds that those figures refer only "to the exports from the Congo Territory," again forgetting that the importation and exportation of a country carrying on trade exclusively by barter, from the nature of the case, are in exact equality with each other. If the imports are larger than the exports, either the merchant must be ruined, or the larger imports are, to a great extent, articles intended for constructing railways, or goods for missionaries, or supplies for persons employed by the "État," and unconnected with trade.

The last description of imports will not be taxed, and, even if it were, the revenue would not be benefited, for, with the levying of the duties, the expenses of the establishment, its maintenance and administration, would be augmented.

Once more, if the Anti-Slavery Convention cannot come into operation on account of the refusal of the Netherlands to agree to the levying of import duties on merchandize, the blame does not rest on the Netherlands, which made proposals for increasing the export duties, but on those who applied these latter already in an exaggerated manner, and still persistently cling to a tax, the objectionable character of which has been repeatedly proved.

Inclosure 3 in No. 66.

Extracts from the Official Protocols of the Berlin Conference, 1884-85.

Séance du 15 Novembre, 1884.

Le Prince de Bismarck (Allemagne, Président).—L'idée fondamentale de ce programme est de faciliter à toutes les nations commerçantes l'accès de l'intérieur de l'Afrique.

A cet effet, il serait à désirer que les marchandises destinées à l'intérieur fussent admises en franchise de transit sur tout le littoral de l'Afrique.

Sir Edward Malet (Angleterre).—La première base de discussion de la Conférence est la liberté du commerce dans le bassin et les embouchures du Congo.

Je vous prie, ensuite, de me permettre quelques paroles sur l'interprétation à donner au terme "liberté du commerce."

Je crois avoir raison, en pensant que le Gouvernement Impérial le comprend comme une garantie aux commerçants de tous pays, qu'aucun droit d'entrée et aucun droit de transit ne sera levé, et que leurs marchandises subiront seulement des impôts modérés, destinés uniquement à pourvoir aux nécessités administratives.

Cette interprétation répond à l'idée générale du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté.

Séance du 19 Novembre, 1884.

Le Marquis de Penafiel (Portugal).—Le Gouvernement Portugais est donc heureux de pouvoir affirmer de nouveau, devant les Puissances ici représentées, ce qu'il a déjà déclaré dans maintes occasions, son adhésion complète aux principes de liberté de commerce et de navigation appliqués au bassin et aux embouchures du Congo, à l'exécution desquels il s'engagera solennellement devant vous.

Séance du 27 Novembre, 1884.

Le Comte de Launay (Italie) rappelle qu'il a déjà présenté des observations pour établir que les seules taxes admissibles seraient des taxes corrélatives à un service rendu et que, pour limiter ces droits, il a proposé de fixer un maximum de 2 ou 4 pour cent *ad valorem*, qu'ils ne devraient pas dépasser.

Le Baron Lambermont (Belgique).—La perception de droits de sortie est d'ailleurs beaucoup moins vexatoire que celle de droits d'entrée,

M. de Kusserow (Allemagne).—Une proposition qui tendrait à introduire des droits d'entrée modifierait matériellement la proposition du Gouvernement Allemand, et ne saurait plus ressortir à la décision d'un simple Comité de Rédaction.

Séance du 1^{er} Décembre, 1884.

Le Baron Lambermont (Belgique) dit qu'il a appuyé tout d'abord, dans la Commission, les propositions tendant à instituer définitivement le régime le plus libéral. Depuis lors, M. Wermann, l'homme le plus compétent en pareille matière, a expliqué comment, dans ce pays, dont l'organisation est encore rudimentaire, le commerce se fait exclusivement par voie de troc, et les marchandises Européennes servent en quelque sorte de monnaie; le Délégué de l'Allemagne a montré comment, par suite, l'interdiction de tout droit d'entrée répond exactement aux nécessités actuelles du commerce. Mais M. Woermann a ajouté que ces conditions se transformeraient dans un avenir plus ou moins lointain, lorsque le commerce sera arrivé à s'opérer, dans l'Afrique Équatoriale comme ailleurs, au moyen de paiements en argent ou de traites. Lorsque cette transformation aura eu lieu, les commerçants eux-mêmes préféreront peut-être que l'exportation ne soit pas seule à supporter toutes les charges fiscales, et il deviendra opportun de modifier le régime économique, qu'il s'agit aujourd'hui d'établir.

No. 67.

Messrs. Hale and Son and Messrs. Jacob and Co. to Foreign Office.—(Received September 12.)

Dear Sir,

10, Fenchurch Avenue, London, September 9, 1890.

BEING deeply interested in the importation of produce here from the Congo Free State—more particularly ivory and rubber—we beg to draw your attention to the excessive duties which have been recently imposed by the Government of the Congo Free State upon exports from that quarter—duties which must seriously imperil, if they do not altogether stop, British trade with that country, and we need scarcely point out to you how great that interest is in such articles as we have mentioned, which, should they be diverted from this country, which appears to be the aim in view in levying these taxes, will materially injure home trade, as the trade there appears to be ruled by the Government, which is virtually a trading Company.

We, therefore, venture to write in the hope that you will cause investigation to be made into the circumstances which have led to these imposts, and represent it to the said Government with the view of alleviating or abolishing them; which, if persisted in, must be detrimental to so many interests, and contrary to the spirit of the deliberations of the Berlin Conference.

The proposed new duties are: On ivory, 200 fr. per 100 kilog; rubber, 50 fr. per 100 kilog.

We are, &c.

(Signed)

HALE AND SON, *Brokers.*E. JACOB AND Co., *Merchants.*

No. 68.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 31. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, September 11, 1890.

WITH reference to a passage in a despatch from Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels No. 232, Slave Trade Conference, of the 23rd ultimo, stating that it had been reported to Baron Lambermont that the Italian and Russian Minister have rather encouraged the Dutch Government in their resistance to the establishment of import duties in the Congo, I think it due to my Italian colleague to observe that I do not believe that he has taken up the line which is attributed to him.

To me he distinctly stated that he was without any instructions upon the subject, and, although it was the only question of any importance here at present, he presumed that his Government took but little interest in it. I may add that in the course of some talk I had the other day with the Belgian Minister, when the attitude of some of the foreign Representatives here with regard to this question happened to be mentioned, Baron d'Anethan only spoke of the Russian Minister as having espoused the Dutch point of view, and observed that his language carried all the more weight here from his having attended the Berlin Conference. This, I may mention, agrees with what I have before had the honour to report to your Lordship.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 69.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 15.)

(No. 235. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, September 13, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT tells me that an official notification has been received from the Italian Government of the adhesion of King Menelek, "Negus of Ethiopia," to the General Act of the Brussels Conference, and that a Circular is being prepared announcing the receipt of this communication to the Signatory Powers.

If, as he foresees is probable, France, Russia, and Turkey should make reserves as to King Menelek's title, they will be informed that the functions of the Belgian Government are limited to receiving and communicating such notifications, and that any reserves or objections thereto must be made direct to the notifying Power.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 70.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 15.)

(No. 236. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, September 13, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT tells me that a project of Tariff which he proposes to submit to the Technical Commission appointed to regulate the new import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo in accordance with the Declaration of the Brussels Conference is nearly completed, and if, as he hopes, the King will sanction it, he trusts that its moderation will remove the exaggerated apprehensions of the Netherlands Government as to the effect of the proposed measure.

The Tariff, as he proposes to frame it, will only impose the maximum rate of 10 per cent. on arms, other imports being lightly taxed, while those specially serving to promote the interests of civilization, such as ships, machinery, and locomotives, will not be liable to any duty. In addition to this, the formalities incident to the declaration of goods for entry are to be as simple as possible, consistent with due precautions against fraud.

Baron Lambermont will further propose to the King to modify and soften his recent Decrees increasing the export duties and taxes in the Congo State. He entirely agrees as to the desirability of Holland being represented on the Technical Commission, and he shared my doubts as to whether she would consent to send a Delegate to it, unless some issue from the position she had taken up can be found for her.

He thinks that the absence of pressure on the part of the Powers and the sympathy of certain of their Representatives may have been mistaken by the Netherlands Government for indifference, and even for encouragement, and it may have stiffened their resistance.

He understands that Belgium is expected to take the initiative in proposing combined action to overcome their resistance, but for this purpose a definite proposal is necessary, and he finds it very difficult to suggest one, unless, indeed, the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Act would agree to empower their Representatives at Brussels to meet in Conference for the special purpose of modifying Article IV of that Act. But this step, which would be a great condescension on the part of the Powers, and to which some might probably demur, would be inadmissible unless the Netherlands Government should undertake to be bound by the decision of the Conference.

As to Holland posing as the sole champion of the sanctity of Treaties, Baron Lambermont said that he could not conceive a more striking example of the respect of the Powers for international engagements than the spectacle of the whole of Europe, intent on accomplishing a great work, being held in check by the refusal of one Power to modify an International Act of which she was the Signatory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 71.

Baron Solvyns to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 19.)

M. le Marquis,

Légation de Belgique, le 16 Septembre, 1890.

LE Sultan de Zanzibar est l'un des Signataires de l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles.

L'adhésion du Roi Menelek doit donc lui être notifiée.

Le Gouvernement Belge n'a pas, pour le moment, d'Agent officiel à Zanzibar, et Sa Hautesse n'a pas, d'ailleurs, de Ministre des Affaires Étrangères. Il est, par conséquent, impossible pour mon Gouvernement de suivre exactement, en cette circonstance, la marche adoptée à l'égard des autres Puissances. D'autre part, il ne semble pas qu'il y ait lieu de faire adresser la notification dont il s'agit par le

No. 70*.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 19.)

(No. 17. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord.

Therapia, September 12, 1890.

WHILST thanking your Lordship for communicating to me a copy of Lord Vivian's despatch No. 56, Africa, dated the 16th August, 1890, inclosed in yours No. 20, Africa, of the 23rd August, on the subject of Slave Trade on the Red Sea, I beg to inclose a copy of a Memorandum addressed to Sir Alfred Sandison by Mr. Marinitch with reference to this important subject, and I beg to add that I fully concur with the views expressed therein.

Occupied as this Embassy has been for many years with questions connected with the importation of Black slaves into the Sultan's dominions, I cannot help regretting that the opposition of His Imperial Majesty's Representative at the Conference at Brussels has been successful to some extent in frustrating the efforts of Lord Vivian in so far as the immediate establishment of an International Slave Trade Bureau, as was proposed.

I cannot help thinking that had the Sultan been represented at the Conference by a Mussulman, instead of by a Greek Christian carrying favour with the Palace Pashas, the result might have been different.

As matters stand, I see no other remedy available but a communication by me to the Sublime Porte, as suggested by Mr. Marinitch.

I must here observe that the success which Her Majesty's Embassy has frequently met with by obtaining the freedom of imported Black slaves into the capital or some of the provincial towns has been mainly due to the zeal of Mr. Marinitch, who found Turkish (Mussulman) officials willing to give him assistance.

I fear that this kind of help may be much less effective in future now that the fanatical Pashas at head-quarters have found out, to the detriment of our philanthropic ideas, that their Representative was able to defend domestic slavery before the Conference, at which some of the other Christian Powers proved themselves lukewarm and even indifferent to our views.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 70*.

Memorandum on Lord Salisbury's despatch No. 20, Africa, of August 23, 1890.

I HAVE carefully considered Lord Vivian's despatch dated the 16th ultimo which refers to the active Slave Trade now carried on in the Red Sea and suggests a measure which, in his Lordship's opinion, may be taken to repress it.

In answer, I beg to state that, according to information which has reached Her Majesty's Embassy, it is a fact that several batches of African slaves have recently been imported into Hodeidah in spite of the repeated representations made by Her Majesty's Embassy to the Sublime Porte and the categorical instructions sent by the latter to the authorities of the Vilayet of Hedjaz.

Under these circumstances, and with a view to repressing the Slave Trade in that maritime zone, I cannot but share Lord Vivian's suggestion connected with the creation of an International Slave Trade Bureau in the Red Sea. But it does not seem to me an easy matter to induce the Sublime Porte to give its consent to such a creation.

You are aware of the difficulties thrown generally into the way by Turkish authorities whenever matters connected with Slave Trade are dealt with by Her Majesty's Embassy; and Turkey, being a Power whose institutions recognize the existence of domestic slavery, the authorities here, in spite of the repeated assurances given by the Sublime Porte, attend generally with a certain reluctance to the representations made by Her Majesty's Embassy, and in many instances are in connivance with slave-dealers, thus deceiving their own Government.

I have therefore reason to fear that at present the Sublime Porte is not prepared on political or other grounds to do anything beyond what the Turkish Plenipotentiary has adhered to at the Brussels Conference or what is stipulated in the Slave Trade

Convention signed between England and Turkey and the provisions of the Law enacted by His Imperial Majesty the Sultan on the 4th (16th) December, 1889.

Moreover, in Article LXXIX of the General Act of the Brussels Conference it is stated that the auxiliary offices in communication with the office at Zanzibar may be established in certain parts of the zone, but by an agreement beforehand between the interested Powers. This condition, as a matter of course, will render exceedingly difficult the establishment of such an auxiliary office in the Red Sea. In fact, Lord Vivian himself, in his above-mentioned despatch, stated that the immediate establishment of an International Slave Trade Bureau in the Red Sea received little or no support in the Conference, while it encountered the resolute opposition of the Turkish Plenipotentiary, and that, in consequence, the British Plenipotentiaries were unable to carry their proposal.

Under these circumstances, I think that the only course open for the present to Her Majesty's Government should be to call the most serious attention of the Sublime Porte to the provisions of Article LXII of the General Act of the Brussels Conference, by which the Turkish Government pledges itself to prohibit the importation of African Slaves, their transit and departure, as well as the trade in slaves, and to organize the most active and strictest supervision at all places where the arrival, transit, and departure of African slaves take place. It would be well also to call its attention to the provisions of Article LXVIII of the same Act, by which the Signatory Powers declare that they are assured that an active supervision will be organized by the Ottoman authorities, especially on the West Coast of Arabia and on the routes which place this coast in communication with the other possessions of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in Asia.

I venture to express the opinion that, should this first application to the Sublime Porte, based on the decisions arrived at at the Brussels Conference, be of no avail, then the question of the creation of an International Slave Trade Bureau in the Red Sea might be brought forward on the ground that the most stringent and severe instructions sent by the Sublime Porte to the Hedjaz and Yemen authorities have been disregarded by them.

(Signed) HUGO MARINITCH.

Pera, September 10, 1890.

Roi directement au Sultan, ainsi qu'on a procédé pour l'invitation à la Conférence.

J'ai été chargé de prendre officieusement l'avis de votre Seigneurie à cet égard. Peut-être pensera-t-elle que la formule ci-jointe, qui mentionne le Gouvernement de Sa Hautesse, sous une autre spécification, répond au cas particulier?

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) SOLVYNS.

Inclosure in No. 71.

Formule Projetée.

AUX termes de l'Article XCVIII de l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles du 2 Juillet, 1890, et en vertu d'un mandat conféré au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Roi d'Italie par Sa Majesté Menelek, Negus Neghesti d'Éthiopie, son Excellence M. le Baron de Renzis, Ministre d'Italie à Bruxelles, a notifié au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Roi des Belges que Sa Majesté Menelek adhère au dit Acte Général et en accepte toutes les obligations.

Conformément à la stipulation finale de l'Article XCVIII susmentionné, le Soussigné, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de Sa Majesté le Roi des Belges, a l'honneur de porter cette notification à la connaissance du Gouvernement de Sa Hautesse Seyyid Khalifat, Sultan de Zanzibar.

Fait à Bruxelles, le

No. 72.

Baron Solvyns to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 19.)

M. le Marquis, *Légation de Belgique, le 16 Septembre, 1890.*

AUX termes de l'Article XCVIII de l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles du 2 Juillet, 1890, et en vertu d'un mandat de Sa Majesté Menelek, Négus Neghesti d'Éthiopie, conféré au Gouvernement du Roi d'Italie, le Baron de Renzis, Ministre d'Italie à Bruxelles, a notifié à mon Gouvernement que le Négus adhère au dit Acte Général et en accepte toutes les obligations.

Conformément à la stipulation finale de l'Article XCVIII susmentionné le Gouvernement du Roi me charge de porter cette notification à la connaissance du Gouvernement de la Reine.

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) SOLVYNS.

No. 73.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 231. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, September 20, 1890.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 236 of the 13th ultimo, respecting the new duties that are to be levied in the Congo Free State, I transmit to your Lordship herewith, for any observations which you may have to offer thereupon, copy of a letter on the subject which has been received from Messrs. Hatton and Cookson.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 74.

Foreign Office to Messrs. Hatton and Cookson.

Gentlemen,

Foreign Office, September 20, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, respecting the new duties that are to be levied in the Congo Free State, and I am to inform you that the matter shall receive his Lordship's consideration.

I am, &c.

(Signed) T. V. LISTER.

No. 75.

Foreign Office to Messrs. Hale and Son.

Gentlemen,

Foreign Office, September 20, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, respecting the import duties to be levied by the Congo State, and I am to inform you that the matter shall receive attention.

I am, &c.

(Signed) T. V. LISTER.

No. 76.

Memorial of the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce.—(Received September 22.)

To the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Memorial of the Middlesbrough Incorporated Chamber of Commerce,

Humbly sheweth:

THAT an application has been made to Her Majesty's Government by a private Association of merchants trading on the West Coast of Africa for a Royal Charter, similar to that given to the Royal Niger Company, empowering them to govern the Oil Rivers district, extending from the British Colony of Lagos to the German Protectorate of the Cameroons.

That your memorialists are of opinion that the granting of such a Charter would not conduce to the interests of general commerce in that country, for a monopoly would be created, the native traders and producers having then only one large customer, who would secure their produce on practically his own terms. Your memorialists believe that under such circumstances the native producers are not likely to be fairly dealt with, seeing that all questions in dispute will have to be settled by the officers of a trading Corporation who are interested in making the utmost possible profit for their employers. It must, your memorialists hold, be injurious to private merchants when the practical Administrator of a district is a rival trader.

Your memorialists further consider that the granting of such a Royal Charter as is asked for would be a breach of the trade principles of this nation.

Your memorialists believe that it would not be expedient to grant a Charter in this case, as the district has already been partially developed by British subjects, and is a British Protectorate under Consular jurisdiction. There is every reason to think that the Oil Rivers district would thrive better as a Crown Colony than under the administration of a Company formed for private gain.

Your memorialists therefore pray that no Charter may be granted to any Association whatever for the Oil Rivers district, but that a Crown Colony may be established, either in connection with or apart from the Colony of Lagos, as in the judgment of Her Most Gracious Majesty in Council may be deemed most desirable.

And your memorialists will ever pray, &c.

Signed and sealed on behalf of the Middlesbrough Incorporated Chamber of Commerce, this 16th day of September, 1890.

(Signed)

JNO. DELK, *President.*HENRY SIMPSON, *Secretary.*

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 22.)

(No. 238. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, September 20, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 236 of the 13th instant, Baron Lambermont has shown me, in confidence, his project of a common Tariff of import duties to be established in the conventional basin of the Congo and of the Regulation for its application in the Congo State, which he intends to submit to the King for sanction.

The proposed Tariff is exceedingly moderate, the only articles on which the maximum duty of 10 per cent. is to be imposed are arms and salt, the former being principally exported by Belgium; wines and beer are to be taxed 7 per cent., and other articles of luxury 6 per cent.; spirits, the principal Dutch article of export, are taxed, under the provisions of the General Act of Brussels, at the low rate of 15 fr. the hectolitre; the great bulk of imports, such as tissues, &c., are only liable to a duty of 4 per cent., while certain articles specially serving to advance civilization, such as ships, machinery, and locomotives, are to be admitted duty free.

In the Regulations for the application of this very moderate Tariff in the Congo State, it has been sought to simplify as much as possible the formalities incident to the declaration of goods for entry, and to prevent them from causing any vexation or hindrance to trade; the importer's declaration is to be accepted as the basis for the assessment of duty, without examination of the goods; the duty need not be paid until they are removed, either in block or in separate packages, as the merchant may prefer; they may be stored in public or private entrepôts, and there will be no interference whatever with merchandize intended for transit.

Baron Lambermont hopes that the great moderation of the Tariff and the scrupulous care that has been taken to regulate its application so as not to hinder commerce, may remove the objections of the Netherlands Government to the establishment of an import Tariff and to the formalities it will involve, while he will let it be known that, if they accept, the Congo Government will consent to modify their recent Decrees by withdrawing the licence tax on spirits (a concession which I deplore, and by reducing the tax on commercial and industrial establishments.

This project of Tariff and Regulation will be communicated to the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Act, probably towards the end of next week, with an invitation to send Delegates to the Technical Commission appointed under the provisions of the Declaration of the Brussels Conference, which is to meet here on the 21st October next, and the note will propose that the Netherlands Government should be invited to be represented unofficially on the Commission, without thereby incurring any obligations to be bound by its decisions.

He thinks that any reasonable objections of the Netherlands Government ought to be removed and their susceptibility fully satisfied by these proposals, and he trusts that all the Powers will authorize their Representatives at the Hague to support them when the proper time comes; if, however, the Netherlands Government should still refuse to consent to the establishment of import duties in the Congo Basin, on the ground that the Brussels Conference was not competent to modify the provisions of Article IV of the General Act of Berlin, the only two solutions of the difficulty that he can see are either that the Powers should give way on this point, and empower their Representatives at Brussels to meet in Conference for the special purpose of modifying Article IV of the General Act of Berlin, on the understanding that Holland would be bound by the decision of the Conference, to which he feels sure that some of the Powers would strongly demur, or that all modifications of the Berlin Act, such as the Resolutions and duties imposed on the trade in arms and spirits, should be eliminated from the General Act of the Brussels Conference, the Import Duties Declaration abandoned, and the Act put in force without the participation of Holland.

Baron Lambermont tells me that Cardinal Lavigerie's Anti-Slavery Conference, which is to meet at Paris in a few days, will make a strong appeal to the Netherlands Government not to arrest the good work of the Brussels Conference by persisting in its recalcitrant attitude, but that the Belgian Delegates will be warned not to take part in or vote on the motion, lest it should be suspected that they originated it.

He has referred me to the papers which I inclose, for the reply of the Congo

Government to the misstatements of the Dutch press on the subject of the Congo import duties, and he has begged me to remind your Lordship that his proposed Tariff and Regulation is as yet only a project, requiring the sanction of the King and the Congo Government before it is finally settled.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 78.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Baron Solvyns.

M. le Ministre,

Foreign Office, September 22, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 16th instant, in which you are good enough to inform me of the adhesion of His Majesty the Negus Negusti to the General Act of the Brussels Conference.

I have, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 79

Foreign Office to British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 24, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, forwarding a Resolution respecting the attitude of the Netherlands Government with regard to the Declaration appended to the General Act of the Brussels Conference, and expressing the desire that it may be presented to that Government by Her Majesty's Minister at the Hague; and I am to state to you, for the information of your Society, that it would be more in accordance with usage if the document were forwarded direct by the Society to its destination.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. V. LISTER.

No. 80.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(No. 17. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 24, 1890.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith, for your information, copy of a letter from the Anti-Slavery Society, and of its inclosure, respecting the action of the Netherlands Government in connection with the recent Slave Trade Conference at Brussels.*

With respect to the desire expressed by the Society that their Resolution should be presented to the Netherlands Government through Her Majesty's Legation at the Hague, I have to inform you that the applicants have been apprised that it would be more in accordance with precedent that they should forward it themselves direct to its destination.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 81.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Baron Solvyns.

M. le Ministre,

Foreign Office, September 26, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 16th instant, inclosing the form in which it is proposed to notify to the Sultan of Zanzibar the accession of King Menelek to the General Act of the Slave Trade Conference of Brussels; and I beg leave to inform you that it appears to Her Majesty's Government to be unobjectionable, and to answer the purpose required.

I have, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 82.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.---(Received September 29.)

(No. 239. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, September 23, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose two articles which have appeared in the "Journal de Bruxelles" of the 21st and 22nd instant, commenting on the Acts of the Berlin Conference, and on the refusal of the Netherland Government to sign the Declaration authorizing the establishment of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo.

To-day's papers report that the Anti-Slavery Congress which has now been convoked by Cardinal Lavigerie, and which is now sitting at Paris, has unanimously passed the following Resolution:—

"Le Congrès Libre Antiesclavagiste exprime sa haute reconnaissance à l'égard de la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles et émet le vœu que toutes les Puissances en signent sans délai l'Acte Général."

The Belgian Delegates abstained from voting on the Resolution, in order not to offend the susceptibilities of Holland.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 82.

Extract from the "Journal de Bruxelles" of September 21, 1890.

LES ACTES DE LA CONFÉRENCE DE BRUXELLES ET LES DROITS D'ENTRÉE DANS LE BASSIN DU CONGO.—Nous venons d'achever la lecture, très intéressante, des Actes de la Conférence de Bruxelles. Ces Actes forment un fort volume de plus de 700 pages. Ils comprennent trente-huit Protocoles avec des Annexes dans lesquelles figurent les Rapports des diverses Commissions instituées par la Conférence, mais les séances des Commissions elles-mêmes n'y sont pas relatées.

Le public n'a été initié que très imparfaitement aux travaux de la Conférence par les comptes rendus de la presse, nécessairement écourtés et incomplets. Pour se rendre compte de leur importance, il faut lire le volume des Actes; il permet de juger de l'ensemble de l'édifice.

Après cette lecture, il est impossible de ne pas être impressionné et conquis par la grandeur de l'œuvre de la Conférence. Cette œuvre restera une date dans l'histoire de la civilisation, car elle est le premier code qui ait été formulé d'une législation internationale répressive de la Traite Africaine. L'Acte de Bruxelles élève une forte barrière contre la Traite, à laquelle il ferme ses routes sur terre et sur mer depuis ses lieux d'origine jusqu'aux lieux de destination des esclaves. Sans doute, la Traite pourra encore se faire jour à travers les mailles du réseau établi, mais ce réseau, si les résolutions de la Conférence s'exécutent, se resserrera sans cesse autour d'elle et on peut dire qu'un coup mortel lui est porté.

L'accord des Puissances n'a pas été réalisé sans difficulté, car des divergences de vues s'étaient produites sur certains points, notamment à propos de la répression de la Traite sur mer, de l'importation des armes à feu et du commerce des spiritueux en Afrique. Mais ces difficultés ont été aplanies grâce au zèle dévoué et au bon vouloir des Plénipotentiaires des États représentés à Bruxelles.

Cette grande et belle œuvre humanitaire de l'entente des Puissances pour réprimer l'œuvre horrible de la Traite et fermer la plaie saignante de l'esclavage Africain va-t-elle échouer et se trouver perdue, anéantie par le refus des Pays-Bas d'acquiescer, comme toutes les autres Puissances, à l'établissement de droits d'entrée dans le Bassin du Congo ?

Nous espérons fermement que non. La lecture même des Actes de la Conférence autorise cet espoir et elle nous paraît propre à dissiper bien des préventions et des erreurs répandues.

La presse Néerlandaise accuse la nôtre d'animosité de langage vis-à-vis des Pays-Bas. Ce reproche ne peut être adressé qu'à quelques-uns de nos journaux. En général, la presse Belge s'est montrée modérée, réservée, animée du désir raisonnable de voir se résoudre amicalement la difficulté qui s'oppose à la réalisation de l'Acte de Bruxelles. Mais la presse Néerlandaise ne nous semble pas être sans péché. Beaucoup de ses journaux se répandent en vives récriminations et accusations contre l'État Indépendant du Congo et la Belgique; ce n'est pas le moyen de favoriser une entente désirable. Ces accusations manquent de justice. Il suffit de lire les Actes de la Conférence pour s'en convaincre.

On a dit d'abord que la Conférence de Bruxelles n'était pas compétente pour modifier l'Acte de Berlin. Les Puissances assemblées à Bruxelles—ce sont les mêmes qui étaient réunies à Berlin—ont unanimement jugé qu'elles pouvaient de commun accord modifier leur premier Acte, et les Pays-Bas eux-mêmes ont reconnu et admis la compétence de la Conférence sous ce Rapport, puisqu'ils ont adhéré à la modification du Traité de Berlin en ce qui concerne les droits sur les alcools.

On a reproché à l'État Indépendant du Congo d'avoir produit tardivement à la Conférence la demande de l'établissement des droits d'entrée. Ce reproche n'est pas fondé. En effet, cette demande est la conséquence des charges nouvelles que l'Acte de Bruxelles impose à l'État du Congo. Celui-ci a loyalement déclaré qu'il ne pouvait pas prendre les engagements nombreux que lui impose l'Acte de Bruxelles sans avoir la certitude d'être en mesure de les exécuter et que cette exécution serait pour lui impraticable sans l'établissement de droits d'entrée. Mais ces charges, il était impossible de les apprécier avant l'adoption des divers Chapitres dans lesquels elles sont échelonnées, et dès qu'il les a connues l'État du Congo a saisi la Conférence de sa demande; celle-ci est donc venue à son heure.

On est allé jusqu'à dire dans la presse Néerlandaise que la Conférence de Bruxelles aurait commis une violation du droit vis-à-vis de la Hollande. La Conférence a, au contraire, manifesté le respect le plus scrupuleux du droit des Pays-Bas, puisqu'elle a proclamé que l'Acte de Bruxelles ne pourra être mis à exécution si les Pays-Bas maintiennent leur opposition. Sans le consentement du Gouvernement Hollandais, l'œuvre de la Conférence croule tout entière; elle sera anéantie. Les nobles efforts faits pour réprimer la Traite seront rendus stériles.

A diverses reprises, au sein de la Conférence, le Plénipotentiaire Néerlandais a manifesté le désir sincère de son Gouvernement de pouvoir, en signant l'Acte de Bruxelles, empêcher l'effondrement de l'œuvre de la Conférence, "si éminemment civilisatrice et grandiose," a-t-il dit, et hier encore le discours du Trône à La Haye ne regrettait-il pas la difficulté qui a empêché ou ajourné jusqu'ici l'adhésion des Pays-Bas ?

Nous pensons que de tels sentiments doivent faciliter l'entente.

On sait ce qui arrête la Hollande; elle craint que les droits d'entrée ne portent atteinte aux intérêts Néerlandais dans le Congo.

Cette crainte est-elle justifiée ?

Nous examinerons cette question demain dans un second article.

Inclosure 2 in No. 82.

Extract from the "Journal de Bruxelles" of September 22, 1890.

LES ACTES DE LA CONFÉRENCE DE BRUXELLES ET LES DROITS D'ENTRÉE DANS LE BASSIN DU CONGO.*—Comme M. van Maldeghem l'a reconnu et constaté à la Conférence au nom de l'État du Congo, les objections du Gouvernement des Pays-Bas ont été inspirées par "sa légitime sollicitude pour les intérêts Néerlandais engagés au Congo," mais la crainte de voir les droits d'entrée porter préjudice à ces intérêts ne nous paraît pas fondée.

* Second article.

La presse Néerlandaise a exagéré du reste l'importance de ces intérêts. Il est inexact de dire, comme elle l'a allégué, que presque tout le commerce du Congo se trouve entre les mains des Hollandais.

Le "Mémorial Diplomatique" donne sur ce point des renseignements intéressants. Nous les reproduisons :—

"Les Hollandais déclarent, d'après les documents officiels, que sur un total d'exportation, en 1889, de 8,572,519 fr. 19 c., ils exportent pour leur compte 6,127,551 fr. 79 c. Mais il ne faut pas perdre de vue que ce sont là des chiffres du commerce général de l'État du Congo, c'est-à-dire, y compris le transit. Dans le chiffre de l'exportation faite par les Hollandais sont comprises non seulement les marchandises provenant réellement des territoires de l'État, mais aussi celles provenant des possessions Françaises et Portugaises, et transitant par l'État du Congo. Pour établir la véritable part qui revient aux Pays-Bas dans le commerce d'exportation, il faut se baser sur le chiffre de leurs affaires dans les 4,297,545 fr. 35 c., qui constituaient en 1889 la valeur du commerce d'exportation *spécial*. Or, ce chiffre n'est que de 2,150,000 fr., c'est-à-dire, la moitié environ. Sans discuter, au reste, sur l'importance des affaires commerciales des Hollandais au Congo, toujours est-il que, s'ils ont beaucoup à dire, ils n'ont pas tout à dire, et-il semble qu'ils auraient été suivis dans leur opposition, si celle-ci était fondée, par les maisons de commerce d'autres nationalités, qui, faisant le commerce sur une moins vaste échelle, doivent d'autant plus tenir à ce que leurs bénéfices ne soient pas compromis. Les Sociétés Belges, au lendemain de leur installation au Congo, y font immédiatement 556,000 fr. d'affaires à l'exportation, c'est-à-dire, quel essor leur est réservé, elles ne protestent pas contre les droits d'entrée. La Compagnie du Chemin de Fer à elle seule importera, les trois ou quatre années qui vont suivre, pour plus de 10 millions, qui seront taxés à l'entrée; elle ne se croit pas cependant mise en péril par les droits qui la frapperont.

"Ajoutons, au surplus, que le commerce d'exportation n'est pas tout le commerce; le commerce d'importation, qui n'est cependant pas absorbé par la Hollande, aurait, lui surtout, fait entendre un cri d'alarme si les droits d'entrée devaient être si préjudiciables. Or, d'après les évaluations officielles, il se fait au Congo et en destination unique du Congo,* 11,000,000 d'importations annuelles, dans lesquels, en étant large, on peut estimer à 3,000,000 ou 3,500,000 la part des Pays-Bas. Chose curieuse, tout cet autre commerce d'importation n'associe pas ses plaintes à celles des Hollandais."

Une première réflexion naît en quelque sorte d'elle-même, c'est que l'État du Congo a un intérêt vital à favoriser le commerce sur son territoire, que sa prospérité dépend de l'extension et de la prospérité de ce commerce, qu'il est absurde de supposer qu'il voudrait établir des droits d'entrée dont l'effet serait d'entraver les transactions commerciales et de leur nuire; ce serait se suicider. On ne peut prêter sans déraison une telle intention à l'État du Congo.

Il est manifeste ensuite que des droits d'entrée dont le taux maximum est de 10 pour cent sont très modérés, et ne peuvent porter préjudice en rien aux intérêts commerciaux établis au Congo, Néerlandais ou autres. Des droits d'entrée souvent plus élevés existent dans presque toutes les possessions de la côte Africaine, et ils n'y empêchent nullement le commerce.

M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch, Plénipotentiaire de l'Autriche-Hongrie, disait avec raison à la Conférence :—

"Messieurs, j'ai vécu pendant des années dans des pays où le commerce étranger était frappé d'un droit d'entrée de 10 pour cent. Nulle part je n'ai remarqué que ce droit fût exagéré et que le commerce ne sût s'en accommoder. La demande du Congo est juste, équitable, et modérée."

La question que la Conférence avait à examiner, comme le disait M. de Macedo, Plénipotentiaire du Portugal, était de savoir si la perception dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo d'un droit d'entrée maximum de 10 pour cent est ou n'est pas préjudiciable au commerce," et la Conférence s'est prononcée pour la négative. Il ne faut pas perdre de vue qu'en fin de compte ce ne sera pas le commerçant Européen importateur qui supportera les droits d'entrée, mais bien le Noir consommateur. L'importateur, pour se rembourser des droits d'entrée, augmentera ses prix, c'est-à-dire, qu'il donnera moins de ses marchandises pour la même contre-valeur. Les droits d'entrée ne diminueront donc pas ses profits et ne nuiront pas à ses intérêts.

Cela est incontestable.

* Chambre des Représentants de Belgique, séance du 16 Juillet, 1890, Rapport de la Section Centrale.

En réalité, les objections du Gouvernement des Pays-Bas visaient beaucoup moins les droits d'entrée eux-mêmes que les entraves que les formalités pour la perception de ces droits apporteraient, selon lui, à la libre circulation des marchandises du Congo. Mais est-ce que les mêmes formalités ou à peu près n'entourent pas la perception des droits de sortie que les Pays-Bas admettent? Est-ce que, du reste, ces formalités de Douane ne sont pas rendues inévitables désormais dans le Bassin du Congo par les droits d'entrée sur les alcools et les mesures restrictives de l'importation des armes à feu que la Conférence a adoptés et que les Pays-Bas ont adoptés avec elle? Qu'il y ait seul un article taxé à l'entrée ou qu'il y en ait plusieurs, les mêmes mesures de contrôle, de surveillance, et de visite, comme on l'a dit, ne sont-elles pas nécessaires pour éviter la fraude?

Dans la Déclaration signée par les Puissances figure l'engagement suivant:—

“Il reste entendu que, dans l'application du régime douanier qui sera convenu, chaque Puissance s'attachera à simplifier, autant que possible, les formalités, et à faciliter les opérations de commerce.”

Un engagement aussi solennel devrait rassurer les Pays-Bas. De plus, il ne faut pas oublier qu'aux termes de la Déclaration, aucun traitement différentiel ni droit de transit ne pourront être établis. Enfin, les Puissances ont ajouté à toutes ces garanties une dernière garantie par la résolution suivante:—

“Après la signature du dit Acte Général, une négociation sera ouverte entre les Puissances qui ont ratifié l'Acte Général de Berlin ou qui y ont adhéré, à l'effet d'arrêter, dans la limite maxima de 10 pour cent de la valeur, les conditions du régime douanier à instituer dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo.”

Cette Commission Technique aura ainsi à statuer sur “les conditions du régime douanier,” c'est-à-dire, précisément sur le point qui soulève les appréhensions de la Hollande. Le taux de 10 pour cent est un maximum. Comme l'a dit à la Conférence son honorable Président, M. le Baron Lambermont, un choix sera fait parmi les marchandises à taxer. Les unes pourront supporter la taxe de 10 pour cent, d'autres seront tarifées à un taux moindre, d'autres enfin seront exemptées de tout droit.

Il nous semble—nous exprimons l'impression personnelle que nous a laissée la lecture des Actes—que la Commission Technique peut devenir un terrain de conciliation et que ses décisions pourront dissiper les craintes et lever les scrupules que le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas peut avoir encore.

Nous souhaitons vivement que l'accord s'établisse. Le Gouvernement Néerlandais doit le souhaiter aussi. Car il est évident que l'échec de l'œuvre de la Conférence, amené par son refus, lui créerait une responsabilité grave que certainement il désire éviter.

Pour permettre à nos lecteurs d'apprécier exactement la situation telle qu'elle s'est dessinée au sein de la Conférence sur cette question des droits d'entrée dans le Bassin du Congo, nous allons placer sous leur yeux quelques extraits des Actes même de la Conférence.

Lorsque M. le Baron Lambermont saisit la Conférence, le 10 Mai, de la proposition relative aux droits d'entrée, celle-ci reçut un premier accueil très sympathique de la part des Plénipotentiaires. Ceux-ci en référèrent à leurs Gouvernements, et, après un examen de plusieurs semaines, ils communiquèrent à la Conférence les instructions qu'ils avaient reçues.

Voici leurs déclarations concordantes:—

“M. de Macedo, Plénipotentiaire du Portugal, annonce à l'assemblée qu'il est autorisé à adhérer sans restriction à l'idée générale de la proposition dont la Conférence est saisie. L'expérience qu'il a personnellement acquise dans les affaires d'Afrique lui permet d'apprécier la valeur des considérations que M. van Maldeghem vient de développer, et, à ce titre, il leur donne un entier assentiment.

M. le Comte d'Alvensleben, Plénipotentiaire de l'Allemagne, s'exprime en ces termes:—

“Nous avons tous entendu avec intérêt, je crois pouvoir dire avec un pénible intérêt, la déclaration de M. le Plénipotentiaire de l'État Indépendant du Congo.

“Lors de la première discussion du projet, j'ai déjà déclaré, comme mon opinion personnelle et celle de mon collègue, que la proposition faite trouverait en principe l'accueil le plus favorable auprès du Gouvernement Impérial.

“Je suis aujourd'hui à même de déclarer que le Gouvernement Impérial a approuvé cette manière de voir et qu'il profitera avec plaisir de l'occasion de témoigner son intérêt et sa sympathie au Roi-Souverain et à l'État Indépendant du Congo.

“Je crois que nous tous, qui sommes animés des mêmes sentiments, sauront trouver le moyen de traduire ces sentiments par une mesure pratique.”

M. Bourée, Plénipotentiaire de la France, dit que les prévisions émises par lui dans la séance du 10 Mai, lorsque la proposition a été présentée à la Conférence, se trouvent confirmées. Ainsi qu'il le pressentait, le Gouvernement de la République lui a donné l'ordre d'adhérer à ce projet de la manière la plus formelle et la plus sympathique. Les vues exprimées par les Plénipotentiaires de l'État Indépendant du Congo répondent absolument à celles du Gouvernement Français. Il apprécie les difficultés considérables que rencontre l'État du Congo dans l'établissement d'un ordre de choses régulier au centre de l'Afrique. Il se rend compte que, pour lui permettre de réaliser le but poursuivi par la Conférence, on doit, en toute justice, en toute raison, lui ménager les ressources nécessaires et l'aider ainsi à mener à bien l'œuvre admirable entreprise par le Roi-Souverain.

M. le Ministre de France répète, en terminant, qu'il s'associe de grand cœur à la proposition et qu'il lui prêtera tout son appui.

M. le Baron de Renzis, au nom de l'Italie, dit :—

“Les paroles que j'ai prononcées dans la séance du 10 Mai dans laquelle on nous a lu la proposition de M. le Baron Lambermont, me dispenseraient de faire connaître les vues de mon Gouvernement à ce sujet. Mais, puisque mes honorables collègues ont ratifié en quelque sorte, par leur discours, l'opinion manifestée le premier jour, je déclare que les instructions de mon Gouvernement à l'égard de cette question me prescrivent de donner à l'État du Congo l'appui le plus chaleureux et le plus efficace.

“Nous devons, par conséquent, décliner toute responsabilité si les Plénipotentiaires de l'État du Congo se trouvaient dans l'impossibilité de signer le Traité, ce qui rendrait stérile une œuvre qui a rencontré tant de sympathies auprès des Gouvernements et qui a été soutenue avec tant de zèle par leurs Plénipotentiaires.”

Lord Vivian s'exprime ainsi :—

“Dans la séance plénière du 10 Mai, mon collègue et moi, agissant d'après nos instructions, nous avons cordialement appuyé la proposition présentée par M. le Président pour l'établissement de droits d'entrée sur les marchandises importées dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo, nécessité créée par les charges nouvelles que la Convention pour la Suppression de la Traite imposera à l'État Indépendant.

“Depuis lors, après avoir eu sous les yeux le Protocole de la séance, le Gouvernement de la Reine a entièrement approuvé notre attitude et s'est ainsi associé aux sentiments de cordiale sympathie pour la proposition que nous avons exprimés à cette occasion.

“La déclaration que vient de nous lire M. le Plénipotentiaire de l'État Indépendant du Congo demande, à notre avis, la plus sérieuse considération.

“Le Roi-Souverain nous déclare, par la bouche de ses Représentants, que le progrès et le développement de l'œuvre civilisatrice que Sa Majesté a entreprise au centre de l'Afrique sont entravés et compromis à cause de l'insuffisance des ressources dont l'État dispose actuellement, et que, par conséquent, il ne pourrait loyalement souscrire à l'œuvre de la Conférence, ni aux obligations nouvelles qu'elle comporte en vue de la suppression de la Traite, obligations que lui seul a acceptées sans réserves, si les ressources nouvelles qu'il a demandées ne lui sont pas accordées.

“Cet exposé de la situation du jeune État a été accueilli dans cette assemblée par une manifestation vraiment remarquable de sympathie unanime, et si, malheureusement, il y avait une Puissance qui hésitait à s'y rallier, je prierais son Représentant de faire à son Gouvernement un tableau fidèle de l'aspect de cette assemblée et de l'unanimité qui y règne sur ce point, et je l'engagerais à réfléchir très sérieusement à l'énorme responsabilité qui incomberait à celui qui, en s'opposant isolément à cette unanimité de vues sur un point capital, mettrait en péril, au moment de son achèvement, tout l'édifice que la Conférence a si soigneusement et si laborieusement construit.”

M. de Martens, au nom de la Russie, dit que, M. le Prince Ourousoff se trouvant dépourvu d'instructions lorsque la question a été soulevée pour la première fois, il n'a pu manifester que ses sentiments personnels, d'ailleurs des plus favorables, M. le Second Plénipotentiaire de Russie est autorisé à déclarer aujourd'hui que le Gouvernement Impérial approuve la proposition et désire témoigner toute sa sympathie à la grande œuvre du Roi des Belges. Dans l'opinion du Gouvernement Russe, la Conférence est compétente pour prendre l'initiative de l'examen et de la solution de la question qui lui est soumise.

M. de Martens, se plaçant au point de vue juridique, et à titre personnel, est

d'avis que les déclarations échangées par l'Association Internationale du Congo avec certaines Puissances ne peuvent avoir pour effet de restreindre la portée de l'Acte Général de Berlin, qui a créé un état de choses nouveau, sur lequel c'est basée la fondation de l'État Indépendant du Congo. Il est donc indispensable de fournir à cet État les moyens d'existence qui lui sont nécessaires et de la mettre ainsi en mesure de faire face aux charges que la Conférence de Bruxelles lui imposera.

M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch, pour l'Empire d'Autriche-Hongrie, dit que, dans la séance du 10 Mai, il avait laissé pressentir déjà l'accueil favorable que la proposition rencontrerait auprès du Gouvernement Impérial et Royal. Aux termes des instructions qui lui sont parvenues, son Excellence déclare que le Gouvernement Austro-Hungrois accepte intégralement cette proposition et qu'il l'appuiera sans réserve.

On ne peut, ajoute M. le Comte Chevenhüller-Metsch, demander de grands sacrifices à un État nouveau sans lui offrir un équivalent en échange. Le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal trouverait très regrettable qu'un refus opposé à la proposition vint faire sombrer l'œuvre élaborée par la Conférence. La responsabilité serait lourde à porter pour la Puissance qui en serait la cause.

M. Gutierrez de Aguera, Plénipotentiaire du Roi d'Espagne, connaissant la sympathie que son Gouvernement a toujours témoignée à l'œuvre de civilisation entreprise par le Roi des Belges, et s'inspirant de ses instructions générales, se rallie avec empressement aux idées exprimées par Lord Vivian, et qui paraissent rencontrer un assentiment unanime au sein de l'assemblée.

M. Schack de Brockdorff, au nom du Danemark, s'exprime ainsi :—

“Connaissant, d'une part, la vive sympathie que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Roi de Danemark porte à la grande œuvre entreprise par le Roi-Souverain, me rendant compte, d'autre part, du bien-fondé des considérations qui nous ont été exposées avec tant de clarté par M. le Second Plénipotentiaire du Congo, je répéterai ce que j'ai eu l'occasion de dire déjà à la séance du 10 Mai, que je ne doute pas qu'un accueil entièrement favorable ne soit réservé à la proposition.”

M. de Burenstam, Plénipotentiaire pour la Suède-Norvège, a déjà fait connaître son opinion personnelle au sujet de la proposition. Il déclare s'y rallier conformément aux ordres qu'il a reçus de son Gouvernement.

Ces déclarations eurent lieu dans la séance du 2 Juin. Le 14 Juin M. le Plénipotentiaire Néerlandais fit connaître les objections et l'opposition de son Gouvernement. Cette opposition fut vivement déplorée, comme l'atteste l'extrait suivant de la séance du 17 Juin :—

M. le Prince Ouroussoff propose, en conséquence, que M. le Président prie M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen de faire connaître à son Gouvernement le vœu de la Conférence, en lui demandant, au nom de l'assemblée, de vouloir bien revenir sur sa première décision. M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen, qui jouit d'une grande influence et d'une haute considération dans son pays, est mieux que personne à même d'accomplir la mission que ses collègues désirent lui confier.

M. le Ministre de Russie est convaincu que le Gouvernement Néerlandais, devant cette manifestation des sentiments de l'assemblée, reconnaîtra que son opposition risque de faire échouer l'œuvre dont la Conférence poursuit la réalisation, et transmettra à son Représentant des instructions nouvelles.

Lord Vivian se rallie entièrement à la manière de voir de M. le Ministre de Russie.

Il croit également que la Conférence ne pourrait avoir un meilleur interprète que M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen, et il le prie instamment de vouloir bien attirer l'attention du Gouvernement Néerlandais sur l'unanimité qui s'est manifestée au sein de l'assemblée et sur la responsabilité qu'il assumerait en maintenant son opposition contre l'opinion unanime de toute l'Europe.

M. le Président constate que la proposition de M. le Prince Ouroussoff a obtenu l'assentiment de la Conférence.

Les Pays-Bas ayant persisté dans leur opposition, un dernier et pressant appel leur fut adressé dans la séance de clôture.

Lord Vivian prit la parole et lut une déclaration de son Gouvernement ainsi conçue :—

“Les délibérations de la Conférence ayant établi que la taxe autorisée par la Déclaration Financière a exclusivement pour but de fournir les moyens nécessaires pour faire face aux dépenses imposées par l'Acte Général afin d'arrêter la Traite des Nègres, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, en vue des grands intérêts en jeu, et

tenant compte de la clause figurant dans la Déclaration du 21 Juin et d'après laquelle les conditions du Tarif doivent être fixées par une négociation à ouvrir immédiatement après la signature de l'Acte Général, ne veut pas se séparer de l'ensemble des Puissances, et nous a autorisés, en conséquence, à signer l'Acte Général et la Déclaration."

Le Plénipotentiaire Anglais s'exprima ensuite ainsi :—

"Messieurs,

"Avant de conclure, je me permettrai de faire un solennel et dernier appel à la Puissance qui, seule maintenant, hésite à apposer sa signature aux deux Actes qui forment l'ensemble de l'œuvre de la Conférence.

"Si, comme nous le pensons, ces hésitations sont inspirées par les mêmes scrupules que ceux qui ont troublé le Gouvernement de la Reine, nous osons espérer, nous osons même attendre que les graves considérations qui ont déterminé notre dernière résolution, surtout celle de ne pas nous séparer de l'ensemble des Puissances au moment de l'achèvement de notre œuvre humanitaire, auront également quelque influence sur les décisions de cette Puissance.

"Notre œuvre ne pourra être complète sans le concours des Pays-Bas. Le Gouvernement Néerlandais a loyalement participé aux travaux qui nous ont permis de la mener à son terme ; qu'il ne nous abandonne pas au moment de son couronnement, en rendant ainsi stérile tout le fruit de nos longs efforts. Nous saluerons son adhésion avec joie, et nous espérons toujours l'obtenir."

M. le Président Baron Lambert desirait ajouter quelques considérations à ce que vient de dire M. le Ministre d'Angleterre, afin de préciser le point de vue auquel se placent les membres de la Conférence.

Tous, ils sont également respectueux du droit dans sa plus large extension. Les observations présentées à ce sujet dans les séances précédentes l'ont clairement démontré.

Au cours de ses délibérations, la Conférence s'est trouvée en présence de droits antérieurement acquis ; toujours elle a préféré s'arrêter plutôt que d'y porter la moindre atteinte. On ne pourra donc lui reprocher d'avoir posé un acte dangereux.

En ce qui concerne particulièrement M. le Ministre des Pays-Bas, tous ses collègues sont prêts à lui tendre la main, ils lui offrent un délai suffisant pour lui permettre de se joindre à eux s'il ne lui est pas possible de le faire immédiatement.

Il nous paraît impossible qu'un pareil appel ne soit pas écouté. L'opposition des Pays-Bas n'a pas un caractère absolu. La preuve en est qu'à la Conférence ils ont réclamé l'ajournement de la question à six mois. En fait, ce délai de six mois, demandé pour un nouvel examen, leur a été accordé, puisque le Protocole leur reste ouvert durant ce temps.

Le Gouvernement Néerlandais aura pu se convaincre, par ce nouvel examen, que le régime des droits d'entrée proposé ne lèsera pas les intérêts commerciaux au Congo, et la Commission Technique appelée à régler ce régime douanier pourra encore lui apporter des garanties nouvelles.

Dans l'hypothèse même où la mesure comporterait un léger sacrifice pour eux, les Pays-Bas hésiteraient-ils à le faire en mettant dans la balance le puissant intérêt humanitaire et civilisateur que cette mesure assure ?

Nous sommes convaincu que non, et que leurs doutes et leurs hésitations prendront fin, comme ceux de l'Angleterre, "en vue des grands intérêts en jeu."

L'œuvre de la Conférence n'était possible que par des concessions réciproques. L'Angleterre a cédé sur la question de la répression de la Traite sur mer, qu'elle avait cependant fort à cœur. D'autres Puissances ont cédé sur la question des mesures contre l'importation des armes à feu, qu'elles voulaient plus restrictives. Les États-Unis et l'Angleterre n'ont-ils pas renoncé, devant l'opposition de la Hollande et de l'Allemagne, aux droits d'entrée élevés qu'ils réclamaient sur les alcools ?

La Hollande, à son tour, ne se montrera pas intransigeante sur la question des droits d'entrée au Congo, et nous avons la confiance qu'elle acquiescera à une solution que tout le monde désire. Son acquiescement sera accueilli avec joie par l'Europe entière, tandis que son refus définitif mécontenterait tous les Gouvernements, et, il faut bien le dire, irriterait l'opinion publique. Il nous paraît impossible qu'elle hésite.

No. 83.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 29.)

(No. 240. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, September 26, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an extract from yesterday's "Journal de Bruxelles," containing a Report of the proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Congress convoked by Cardinal Lavigerie at Paris, and of the Resolutions which it adopted.

Your Lordship will observe that this Congress cordially indorsed the conclusion of the Brussels Conference, and resolved to regulate its independent action by the provisions of Chapter I of the General Act. It also expressed a wish that the Act should be finally ratified without delay.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 83.

Extract from the "Journal de Bruxelles" of September 25, 1890.

LE CARDINAL LAVIGERIE, LE CONGRÈS ANTIESCLAVAGISTE, ET LES PAYS-BAS.—Le Cardinal Lavigerie, dans son éloquente allocution au Congrès assemblé à Paris, a rappelé que c'est à la voix de Léon XIII, et encouragé par lui, qu'il a prêché partout la croisade contre la Traite et l'esclavage des Noirs. Cette croisade a activé le mouvement d'opinion en faveur de la répression du mal esclavagiste. Le Cardinal a rendu un éclatant hommage à la Conférence de Bruxelles et à son œuvre. Voici comment il s'est exprimé:—

"Qu'ont fait, en effet, les Puissances réunies à la Conférence de Bruxelles? Ceux d'entre vous qui ont lu l'Acte Général ont pu s'en rendre compte comme moi.

"En un seul mot, les Puissances y ont discuté, adopté et consacré, en principe, toutes les mesures qu'au nom de la religion, au nom de la nature, au nom de la pitié, nous avions hautement sollicitées.

"Quand on sait toutes les difficultés publiques ou secrètes qui s'opposaient à un tel résultat, on ne peut assez l'admirer. Il y a fallu plus que la main de l'homme. Il y a fallu plus que s'y voit clairement. *A Domino factum est istud.*

"Lorsque j'ai pris connaissance pour la première fois de l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles, qui m'avait été gracieusement adressé, je l'ai fait d'abord avec tremblement, craignant d'y trouver des mesures insuffisantes ou peut-être hostiles à la réalisation de nos vœux; mais, après avoir terminé ma lecture, j'ai voulu la recommencer et, cette fois, je l'ai faite après avoir rendu grâce à Dieu, dont toutes les Puissances Catholiques, Chrétiennes, dissidentes, Musulmanes même, ont suivi les inspirations après avoir inscrit son nom sacré en tête de leurs travaux."

Le Cardinal a fait connaître et résumé ensuite les principales dispositions de l'Acte de Bruxelles. Puis il a ajouté ces paroles:—

"Dès le premier moment, cette double pensée a été celle du grand Pape qui a fait appel à notre dévouement.

"Il a voulu, par le libre concours de tous, sans distinction de nationalité, amener l'abolition d'un fléau flétri par toutes les nations civilisées. Ce sera un des plus nobles spectacles de l'histoire qu'en deux années, à la voix de ce grand vieillard, une telle Résolution ait été proposée, prise, proclamée dans l'Acte Général de Bruxelles, par le vote des nations."

Le Cardinal Lavigerie a encore dit qu'il fallait agir sur l'opinion pour affermir les Puissances dans leurs résolutions et leurs engagements, et il a adressé à la Hollande "un dernier appel au nom du monde civilisé tout entier." Cet appel, il l'a accentué dans une apostrophe improvisée et émue, dont nous recevons de Paris le texte exact:—

"L'Acte de la Conférence de Bruxelles," a-t-il dit, "est une loi générale, votée par toutes les nations, Chrétiennes, Schismatiques, Musulmanes, par toutes, sauf une, la Hollande.

"Ah! si ma voix pouvait porter jusque dans cet excellent pays, dont je connais les Evêques dont je sais la charité, jusqu'aux pieds de ce Souverain, dont j'ai expérimenté, la charité, je lui dirais:—

“Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas encore donné à votre Représentant l'ordre de signer? Pourquoi tardez-vous encore? Pouvez-vous porter devant Dieu la responsabilité de laisser continuer la Traite et se perpétuer ces horreurs? Pouvez-vous laisser un pareil héritage à votre fille? Non, vous ne refuserez pas de vous rendre aux vœux de tout un peuple!”

Enfin le Congrès Libre Antiesclavagiste, dans sa première Résolution, que nous avons fait connaître hier, a exprimé sa haute reconnaissance à l'égard de la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles et émis le vœu que toutes les Puissances signent sans délai l'Acte Général.

Nous appelons l'attention sur ces faits importants. Il y a quelques jours nous avons reproduit le texte des vœux adressés aux Pays-Bas par les Représentants de toutes les Puissances assemblées à Bruxelles.

C'était la voix de l'Europe politique et de ses Gouvernements qui se faisait entendre. Aujourd'hui nous entendons celle, aussi insistante, de l'Europe Chrétienne.

Il nous semble impossible que les Pays-Bas restent indifférents. Le Gouvernement Néerlandais ne sera pas insensible à l'appel de l'Europe politique, et les Catholiques ou plutôt tous les Chrétiens de Hollande seront touchés par l'appel Chrétien venu du Congrès Libre Antiesclavagiste.

Nous n'en doutons pas, l'opinion publique en Hollande, si elle connaissait ces faits, si elle était instruite de ces appels, si l'on mettait sous ses yeux, comme nous l'avons fait, les textes mêmes des vœux de la Conférence de Bruxelles et des Résolutions du Congrès de Paris, ne tarderait pas à se modifier et à s'émouvoir. Malheureusement, nous devons le constater, la presse Hollandaise laisse ignorer à ses lecteurs tous ces textes et tous ces faits.

Nous reproduisons, à titre de document, l'appréciation du “Journal de Genève” :—

“Dans le discours qu'il a prononcé à l'ouverture de la Session du Parlement à La Haye, le Premier Ministre, M. Mackay, a fait allusion à cet échec d'une œuvre humanitaire qui menace de sombrer au port. Mais il ne s'est pas expliqué sur la responsabilité qui revient à la Hollande dans cet échec et sur les causes, d'ordre assez vulgaire, qui l'ont amené à se séparer des autres nations, au risque de retarder de dix ans encore, peut-être davantage, le règlement définitif de la question de l'esclavage. L'influence des maisons de Rotterdam qui font le commerce avec l'Afrique et leur résistance obstinée aux taxes d'importation demandées par l'État du Congo pour pouvoir concourir à l'abolition de la Traite ont été malheureusement assez puissantes sur le Gouvernement Hollandais pour lui dicter une attitude négative qui persiste et qui menace de faire échouer l'œuvre péniblement élaborée après de si longues discussions.

“Il faut espérer que des explications seront demandées au Gouvernement et que les Chambres de La Haye seront appelées à se prononcer sur l'étrange attitude qui, à l'étonnement général, vient d'être imposée à leur pays.”

LE CONGRÈS ANTIESCLAVAGISTE.

Paris, le 24 Septembre, 1890.

Le Congrès Antiesclavagiste s'est terminé hier par un banquet donné à l'Hôtel Continental, sous la présidence de M. Keller.

Cinquante convives environ y assistaient, parmi lesquels le Marquis de Vogüé, M. Allen, M. de Macedo, Mgr. Jacobs, M. Lefèvre Portalis, Mr. John Crawford.

Plusieurs toasts très applaudis ont été portés.

Paris, le 23 Septembre, 1890.

Aujourd'hui, à 9 heures, ont commencé les travaux des Délégués.

Trois questions restaient soumises à leur examen, et d'abord celle des travailleurs libres.

Cette question a été l'objet d'une longue discussion, et elle le méritait, car elle est d'une importance majeure. N'y a-t-il pas lieu de craindre que sous le nom de travailleurs libres on ne ressuscite l'esclavage dans les pays où il est officiellement proscrit?

M. le Comte H. d'Ursel a pris une large part à cette discussion et a déposé sur

les bureaux du Congrès la législation de l'État Indépendant du Congo concernant les travailleurs libres.

Cette législation consacre ce principe que le Noir doit être traité comme un mineur et qu'une protection spéciale doit le couvrir, dans le but surtout que le contrat de louage ne dégénère pas en esclavage domestique.

Par une application de ce principe, le Directeur de la Justice est spécialement chargé de la protection des Noirs et, en cas de besoin, doit prendre d'office leur défense, sans qu'ils réclament eux-mêmes son intervention.

Un des documents les plus précieux dont on nous a donné lecture est le Rapport fait au Roi-Souverain du Congo par l'Administrateur-Général de la Justice et des Affaires Étrangères sur la suppression de l'esclavage et la protection des Noirs dans l'État Indépendant du Congo.

Les mesures les mieux combinées ont été employées, les dispositions législatives les plus sages ont été prises afin d'assurer aux Noirs, tant indigènes que non indigènes, une protection toute spéciale, et empêcher par toute voie détournée le retour à l'esclavage.

Après des observations de quelques membres, le Congrès a émis le vœu qu'en fait comme en droit la liberté soit assurée à tous les travailleurs Noirs, soit qu'il s'agisse des indigènes, soit de ceux venus de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, de Sierra-Leone, de la République de Libéria, du Dahomey, de Loango, de Cabinda, &c.

Passant à la seconde question, les Délégués sont tombés d'accord pour laisser à chaque Comité National le soin de juger le concours pour le meilleur ouvrage populaire en faveur de l'abolition de l'esclavage.

La troisième question, celle des Senoussis, espèce de religieux fanatiques Musulmans, fut aussi longuement débattue. Ces sectaires habitent particulièrement le nord de l'Afrique, et c'est de leur sein que sont sortis les Mahdis qui ont détruit l'œuvre de la civilisation dans le bassin du Nil. Ennemis acharnés du nom Chrétien, ils en veulent la disparition.

Les Délégués se rallient aux conclusions de son Eminence le Cardinal Lavigerie dans sa lettre au Président de la Conférence de Bruxelles, où il demande que les Gouvernements, surtout ceux qui ont des possessions ou des Etats dans le Nord de l'Afrique, prennent des mesures efficaces pour combattre le Senoussisme, et en arrêter le développement progressif.

Des mesures sont ensuite recommandées pour développer les ressources de l'œuvre antiesclavagiste. Le principal moyen, c'est la publicité.

Il faut s'adresser à l'opinion publique, l'émouvoir, éclairer les esprits, toucher les cœurs. La presse, sous ce rapport, est destinée à rendre les plus grands services.

Il faut l'engager à continuer ses bons offices et à faire pénétrer jusque dans les plus humbles hameaux la vérité sur les malheurs des pauvres Noirs, et sur les institutions fondées pour y porter remède.

Après avoir émis les vœux à l'unanimité des membres présents, les Délégués se sont séparés en se donnant rendezvous dans deux ans, au prochain Congrès.

Paris, le 23 Septembre, 1890, 7 heures du soir.

La séance de cet après-midi a été magnifique et émouvante. Son Éminence le Cardinal Lavigerie était là avec Mgr. Livinhac, accompagné de ses quatorze nègres.

Une foule de notabilités antiesclavagistes se trouvaient réunies pour entendre les conclusions du Congrès.

M. le Baron d'Avril a d'abord pris la parole sur le Sahara.

A tous les points de vue, il est de l'intérêt de la France de pénétrer, par le chemin de fer Trans-Saharien, dans l'intérieur du Désert pour rejoindre ses possessions du Niger.

Ce sera le meilleur moyen de couper en deux le faisceau de confédérations Musulmanes qui, tel que les Senoussis, ne rêvent rien de mieux que l'anéantissement et le massacre de tous les Chrétiens. La civilisation pénétrera dans ces régions du Soudan, dont les populations ont été rendues si fanatiques par l'Islamisme.

Après M. le Baron d'Avril, c'est Mgr. Livinhac qui a pris la parole. Il a fait un tableau émouvant des scènes de sauvagerie dont il a été témoin dans l'Ouganda. Il a arraché des larmes à ses auditeurs lorsqu'il a dépeint les atroces traitements dont ses pauvres Chrétiens Noirs ont été l'objet de la part des Arabes Musulmans.

Mgr. Livinhac a eu aussi des accents déchirants lorsqu'il a supplié l'auditoire de secourir les pauvres Noirs délaissés, persécutés, martyrisés.

Ensuite son Éminence le Cardinal Lavigerie a remercié les membres du Congrès de ce qu'ils ont fait pour l'œuvre antiesclavagiste. Des félicitations et des remerciements particuliers sont dus aux membres Anglais de l'Association, ainsi qu'au Gouvernement de la Reine d'Angleterre, qui a aidé de toutes ses forces à la réussite de l'œuvre.

Ici a eu lieu un incident des plus touchants. Comme le Délégué Anglais, Sir C. Allen, l'illustre Secrétaire de "l'Anti-Slavery Society," se levait pour répondre, le Cardinal l'attire à lui, l'a vivement pressé dans ses bras et l'a embrassé aux applaudissements répétés du millier de personnes réunies dans la grande salle de la Société de Géographie.

Avant de commencer la lecture des Résolutions du Congrès, M. de Vogüé a donné lecture d'un magnifique télégramme du Pape, Sa Sainteté Léon XIII, bénissant les travaux du Congrès, et hâtant par ses vœux, ses prières, la délivrance des pauvres Noirs.

Puis le Congrès a adopté les Résolutions suivantes :—

1. Le Congrès adresse aux Puissances Signataires de l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles l'expression de sa profonde reconnaissance pour l'œuvre qu'elle a accomplie, et exprime le vœu que les dernières conditions qui restent à remplir le soient sans délai, pour répondre aux sentiments de tout le monde civilisé.

2. L'œuvre antiesclavagiste est divisée en Comités Nationaux qui, moralement unis dans la poursuite d'un but commun, ont une organisation et un mode d'action absolument indépendants.

3. Le Congrès compte avant tout sur les moyens pacifiques, spécialement sur l'action morale des missionnaires, pour relever les Noirs; aussi est-il résolu à seconder les missionnaires par tous les moyens en son pouvoir.

4. Les Comités Nationaux feront œuvre utile en suscitant, là où les circonstances le feront désirer, les dévouements privés et le concours de volontés dans les conditions et sous les réserves indiquées au Chapitre I^{er} de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles.

5. Le Congrès exprime respectueusement le vœu que le Saint-Père, qui a revendiqué la liberté des enfants déshérités de la grande famille humaine, et qui a si généreusement contribué aux premières dépenses de l'œuvre du Cardinal Lavigerie, accorde une caisse annuelle pour le bien de l'œuvre antiesclavagiste.

6. Le Congrès émet le vœu que des mesures soient prises, si déjà elles ne l'ont été, pour prévenir les abus dans le recrutement des travailleurs libres et sauvegarder efficacement la liberté des Noirs, et la sincérité des engagements conclus avec eux.

7. Le Congrès appelle l'attention de toutes les Puissances, même Musulmanes, sur le danger que le développement de certaines sectes Africaines fait courir à la liberté des Noirs.

8. Il est à désirer que chaque Comité National fasse paraître périodiquement des Rapports et entretienne des relations avec la presse, afin de la tenir au courant. Il paraît aussi important que l'échange de ces publications soit fait entre les Comités Nationaux, et qu'une entente commune maintienne entre eux les liens nécessaires au progrès de l'œuvre.

9. Le Congrès exprime sa reconnaissance au bienfaiteur qui a fondé un prix de 20,000 fr. destiné à récompenser le meilleur ouvrage publié sur l'antiesclavagisme. Il exprime le désir que chaque Comité National examine les ouvrages qui lui seront soumis par les auteurs de sa nation, et qu'il désigne celui qui lui semblera le plus complet.

10. Le Congrès émet le vœu que les secours envoyés aux missionnaires soient exempts de droits de Douane.

11. Le Comité estime qu'il est éminemment utile que les Directeurs des Comités Nationaux se réunissent encore pour échanger leurs vues, et décide qu'un nouveau Congrès aura lieu dans un délai de deux ans au plus tard.

No. 84.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 29.)

(No. 241. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, September 27, 1890.

THE King sent for me to-day to speak to me about the project of Tariff of import duties to be established in the Congo Basin which Baron Lambermont had submitted to him.

His Majesty said that, after a most careful examination of Baron Lambermont's figures, he was of opinion that some of the duties proposed by him were too low; but His Majesty wished me to assure your Lordship that the Tariff would be a most moderate one, and that the scale of duties would not exceed what was indispensable to meet the financial requirements of the Congo State. His calculations were not framed on what the duties would immediately return, but on what they would probably produce when commerce was more developed; and His Majesty declared that the whole of the import and export duties combined would only yield about 1,000,000 fr. (40,000*l.*), or a quarter of the revenue required for the administration of the country, and that the balance of 3,000,000 fr. would have to be provided from the annual grant of 2,000,000 fr. from the Belgian Government and out of his own pocket.

His Majesty begged me to impress these facts and figures on your Lordship in justification of his positive declaration that the project of Tariff, when finally settled, would represent the extreme limits of the sacrifices he was able to make, and that if the Netherlands Government should refuse to accept it, and thereby render the work of the Brussels Conference abortive, he must repudiate, with a clear conscience, all responsibility for the failure.

I said that it would be deplorable if the results of the arduous labours of the Conference, with which His Majesty's name was so closely associated, should be sacrificed to a petty question of money; that I thought, if the principle of the establishment of import duties could be secured, the Tariff should be so framed as to give no possible pretext to Holland to object to it on the ground of its hampering commerce, while it was probable that trade, and the consequent yield of the duties, would greatly increase when the Congo Railway was opened. I hinted that the expenditure might possibly be reduced, and I ventured to observe that the simultaneous raising of the export duties on ivory and india-rubber, and the proposed establishment of import duties, had alarmed commerce, both in Belgium and abroad, caused a fall in the shares of the Companies interested in trade in the Congo, and somewhat chilled the enthusiasm which the development of the King's work in Africa had begun to awaken in Belgium.

His Majesty said that it was impossible to reduce expenditure, which was rapidly increasing as the country was opened up, and that merchants seemed to expect to reap all the advantages thus secured to trade without being called on to bear any share of the cost; and after explaining the increase of duties on ivory and india-rubber, to which I refer in another despatch,* he repeated that all the duties combined would not yield more than a quarter of the necessary revenue; that he could not possibly afford to make any further sacrifices; and that the project of Tariff, as finally settled, would be his "last word."

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 85.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 29.)

(No. 70. Africa.)

My Lord,

Brussels, September 27, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatches Nos. 231 and 232 of the 24th instant, I took occasion in the interview which I had the honour of having with the King to-day to call His Majesty's attention to the complaints of British merchants of the new export duties on ivory and india-rubber as being almost prohibitory, adding that I had reason to believe that similar complaints had been made by other foreign as well as by Belgian merchants, and that the publication of the new duties had caused a heavy fall in the shares of the Belgian Companies interested in this trade.

* See No. 85.

His Majesty said that he had foreseen and foretold this outcry.

The trade in ivory and india-rubber, which were the products of the State domains in the Upper Congo, had hitherto been in a great measure in the hands of the State, and the King maintained that the Congo State had as much right to dispose of the products of its domains as the Belgian or any other Government had to sell the products of its forests, or any other State property. His view on this point had been confirmed by the advice of eminent counsel.

Nevertheless, yielding to the remonstrances of the merchants against State competition with private enterprise, the Congo Government had agreed to forego the exercise of this right, but the merchants were warned at the same time that the State must have compensation in the shape of taxes for its loss of revenue, which was admitted by them, but since they found that the large profits they had hitherto made on ivory would be considerably reduced by the new duties, they cried out.

The Congo State could not possibly dispense with the revenue derived from its domains, to which it had an indisputable right, and which was required to open up the country, and if merchants objected to State competition in the disposal of these domains, they must pay compensation in the shape of duties, which His Majesty maintains were not excessive, and not equivalent to the loss of revenue, which the State would sustain by the abandonment of its rights.

With reference to the complaint of our merchants, that the new duties will specially affect British trade, and that they are contrary to the letter and spirit of the General Act of Berlin, I would observe that the duties will apply equally to the ivory trade of all countries, including Belgium, and that I am not aware that the Berlin Act in any way limits or controls the power of the Congo State to levy export duties.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 86.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 29.)

(No. 33. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, September 27, 1890.

I HAVE read with much interest Lord Vivian's despatches Nos. 233 and 236 on the subject of the Congo import duties, copies of which your Lordship did me the honour to transmit to me.

From the reports which I have recently had occasion to address to your Lordship, it will have been gathered that there is, in my opinion, little prospect of the Netherlands Government abandoning the position which they have taken up in this question.

I fear, therefore, that Baron Lambergmont's hopes that the moderate Tariff, which has now been elaborated, will so commend itself to the Dutch as to induce them to give up their opposition to the proposed measure, are not very likely to be realized.

The Dutch continue to cling to the letter of Article IV of the Berlin Act, and persist in maintaining that the Brussels Slave Trade Conference was in no way competent to modify it.

It has indeed been hinted that they might be willing to examine in a Conference, called expressly for that purpose, the question of the opportuneness of revising Article IV, but I do not feel at all assured that they would agree beforehand to be bound by the decision of such a Conference.

Although I am unable to share the apparently sanguine views entertained at Brussels as to the issue of the controversy, I quite agree with Baron Lambergmont in thinking that the absence of all pressure on the part of the Powers favourable to the Congo duties, and the sympathy shown to the Netherlands Government by some of my colleagues have confirmed them in their resistance.

The Dutch Ministers have, I know, on several occasions, pointed to the fact of none of the foreign Representatives being formally instructed to urge their acceptance of the import duties as a proof that but little interest was felt in the question outside Belgium.

While they have been able, therefore, to assert with some plausibility that opinion abroad is by no means clearly shown to be adverse to them, they have at

the same time been more and more hardened every day in their resistance by the manifestations of public opinion at home.

A question which, at the outset, was interesting only to a small but tenacious knot of Rotterdam traders, has now grown to national proportions, and has been taken up by the country at large on patriotic grounds.

The Government are extolled by the press of all parties, not so much for the stand they are making in favour of Dutch commercial interests, as for their gallant upholding of the respect due to international engagements, which is held to be creditable to the national character.

The national *amour-propre*, in short, is fully roused, and this, too, in a question where the country finds itself face to face with a nation towards which it has at no time harboured very cordial sentiments.

It likewise so happens that various other circumstances combine just now to make it more difficult for the Government to yield in this question.

In view of a general election, which is not far distant, the Cabinet can less than ever afford to lose any prestige.

This is more especially the case with the Minister directly in charge of the question.

M. Hartsen is, rightly or wrongly, held to have been anything but a success at the Foreign Office.

For the first time during his tenure of office he finds himself in complete harmony with the general opinion of his countrymen, and it is almost too much to expect of him to incur the certain loss of an approval to which he has been but little accustomed.

But, even if he were personally inclined to yield, he has at his back the Minister of Waterstaat (Public Works and Commerce), M. Havelaar, a man of considerable talent and energy, who is a Rotterdamer of the first water—as water goes in this country of stagnant canals—and has from the first bitterly opposed the Congo import duties.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 87.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received September 29.)

(No. 34. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, September 27, 1890.

THE Belgian Minister, who is much struck by the mischievous effect of the language held here by some of his colleagues on the subject of the Congo import duties, observed to me, in confidence, the other day, that it was difficult not to think that the Dutch Government were receiving some secret encouragement in their opposition to the measure. He had, in fact, he said, been assured by a person of some standing here, whom he was bound not to name, that such encouragement was given to the Government and that it came from Germany. At the same time, added my colleague, it was scarcely possible that such should be the case if, as he had good reason to believe, the Emperor William had given King Leopold at Ostend a positive assurance that he would support him in the questions relating to the Congo State.

As regards the language attributed to my colleagues, I would observe that it is, perhaps, not unnatural that they should seize upon a question not uninteresting in itself and make it the theme of academic discussions. The routine of Diplomatic life at this Court affords, as a rule, so little material for such discussions, that the Congo duties, and more particularly the right of the Brussels Conference to revise the Act of Berlin, have been a perfect godsend to them. Unfortunately it has also had the effect of making the Dutch Government, who, from force of circumstance, are seldom mixed up in general affairs, doubly conscious of what was due to themselves in the exceptionally prominent part they are now playing on the European stage. Certainly, the harmony which distinguished the Brussels Conference has not been reflected here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 89*.

Colonel Euan-Smith to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 267.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Zanzibar, October 4, 1890, 1.30 P.M.

IN an official letter received by the Sultan from his Delegates, certain officials of the Belgian Secretariat were favourably brought to His Highness' notice in connection with Brussels Conference. Sultan would like to offer his Zanzibar Order to his two Plenipotentiaries, to Baron Lambergmont, and to the gentlemen referred to.

Would Sir John Kirk telegraph the number and classes of the Order required, should this proposal be acceptable?

No. 88.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir W. White.

(No. 22. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 29, 1890.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 17, Africa Conference, of the 12th instant, inclosing a Memorandum by Mr. Marinitch on the subject of Slave Trade in the Red Sea, I have to request you to make a representation to the Porte in the sense suggested by Mr. Marinitch, and to call their earnest attention to the importance of the subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 89.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 37. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 3, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an extract from the "Courrier de la Meuse," reproducing a letter taken from the "Javabode" of the 30th August last, in which it is stated that the Government of the Netherlands Indies have issued a Decree prohibiting the importation of spirits into the Islands of Sangir, Tulus, and Nanoesa, to the north-east of Celebes. This total prohibition, says the writer of the letter, had hitherto been confined to Dutch New Guinea, where it had been decreed at the instance of Great Britain and Germany. The object of the present measure is to protect the native races, which were being rapidly decimated by the deleterious liquor sold to them. The writer contrasts the action of the Dutch authorities on this occasion with the line taken by the Dutch Government towards the Congo State in the same question of the liquor traffic, and observes "that it is possible that the Decree may interfere to some extent with the trade of the islands above referred to, but it is certain, at any rate, that the native races will not be exterminated."

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

Inclosure in No. 89.

Extract from the "Courrier de la Meuse" of October 2, 1890.

DANS NOS COLONIES.—On lit dans une correspondance du "Javabode" du 30 Août dernier :—

"Le Gouvernement des Indes Néerlandaises a pris, pendant cette dernière quinzaine, une Ordonnance des plus importantes, qui interdit l'importation des liqueurs fortes dans les Iles de Sangir, Tulus, et Nanoesa, au nord-est des Célèbes.

"Jusqu'ici cette interdiction n'existait qu'à l'égard de la Nouvelle-Guinée, et à la demande spéciale de l'Allemagne et de l'Angleterre, qui avaient prohibé les liqueurs fortes dans leurs possessions de l'île.

"L'Ordonnance d'interdiction actuelle s'inspire d'un but plus humanitaire, tant les peuplades se trouvent décimées par les alcools sophistiqués de Hambourg que les marchands indigènes étrangers échangeaient contre le copra et d'autres produits des îles.

"Le Gouvernement des Indes a tenté d'abord d'empêcher le commerce d'échange en prescrivant aux Chefs de tribus que le commerce des alcools ne pourrait s'opérer qu'au comptant.

"Cette mesure n'ayant point enrayé le commerce d'échanges en alcools et en alcools frelatés, le Gouvernement des Indes a recouru à la mesure radicale de l'interdiction complète de l'importation.

"Le correspondant du 'Javabode' observe combien cette politique du Gouvernement Néerlandais diffère de celle qu'il a suivie vis-à-vis du Congo, où il n'a point voulu coopérer à l'interdiction des spiritueux, et le correspondant ajoute :—

"Il est possible que cette mesure nuise quelque peu au commerce des îles, mais il est certain que les races indigènes ne seront pas anéanties."

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 242. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, October 4, 1890.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 241 of the 27th ultimo, reporting a conversation which you had held with the King of the Belgians on the subject of the Congo duties, and I have to inform you that your language, as reported therein, is approved.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 6.)

(No. 36. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 2, 1890.

M. HARTSEN, who has been absent on leave, has now returned to the Foreign Office, and in the course of a visit I paid him yesterday the conversation turned on the Congo duties. His Excellency's views on the subject have apparently undergone no change, although he professes to be as desirous as ever to see the question disposed of in a manner that should be satisfactory to all parties.

I asked his Excellency whether he could offer any suggestion, and, pointing to the Act of Berlin, which was lying on his table, he said that he felt sure that the best method would be for the Powers to agree to meet for the purpose of thoroughly reconsidering the position of the Congo State, and for that purpose revising in that Act what might be necessary.

Article XIX of the Berlin Act itself afforded, he thought, the requisite machinery, since it provided for a "Commission de Navigation" which might be called together when it was deemed advisable. I ventured to point out to M. Hartsen that the attributions of the Commission he spoke of appeared to me, by the wording of the Article, to be confined to measures affecting the navigation of the river, but that they did not include such matters as that with which we had now to deal.

I inquired of his Excellency whether he had received a communication from the Anti-Slavery Society, which was, I understood, about to be addressed to the Netherlands Government. That document had not as yet, apparently, reached his hands. I then observed that, from the step which had been resolved upon by that influential Body, it could be clearly seen that Holland was held accountable for the non-completion of the work which had been done at Brussels. From such a reproach to the charge that Holland was altogether lukewarm in the cause of the suppression of slavery, there was but an easy transition. The old French proverb, "*Qui veut la fin veut les moyens*," would be readily quoted against her, and a Government which had every claim to be reckoned amongst the most humane and enlightened, would incur the obloquy of having frustrated a great work of civilization.

It must, I said, be remembered that, however cogent the arguments against the import duties might appear to those directly interested in the question in this country, the great mass of opinion abroad could not be expected to enter into or take account of them, and that the broad fact would alone remain that Holland had single-handed impeded the beneficent action of all the allied Powers.

It was surely a serious responsibility for the Government of this country to assume, and there was another point of view, which increased to my mind its gravity.

The Congo State was struggling with serious financial difficulties.

If it were not afforded some relief and given the means of existence, it was not impossible to imagine that those who had created it might, in despair, give up the ungrateful task of maintaining it.

What would then happen? There would probably be a struggle for it between France and Germany.

Surely no one could desire that it should fall into the hands of either of those Powers, and it was therefore absolutely essential to ward off such a danger by affording the Congo State, as at present constituted, the means of existence ("*le rendant viable*").

I was aware, I said, that there was a party here who openly admitted their indifference

to the ultimate fate of the Congo State, but I could not think that the Netherlands Government shared such views.

M. Hartsen said with some warmth that he was quite opposed to those who professed not to care what became of the Congo, though he admitted that there were such.

He, for one, thought it very desirable that the sovereignty over those regions should remain in the hands in which it was now placed.

Nevertheless, he could not but complain most seriously of the measures recently decreed with respect to export duties, licences, and other charges imposed upon trade, and in this country people were naturally shocked at these measures having been proposed at a time when the Conference was still sitting, and being kept secret till the other day.

The effect of all this would probably be to make the Dutch traders transfer their operations to Portuguese territory, whither great efforts were being made to attract them.

In speaking of the unpleasant turn which the discussion had taken in Belgium and here, M. Hartsen observed that he thought that the Dutch had on the whole been moderate, but there was no doubt that there existed a very strong feeling against the King of the Belgians himself, who was held not to have dealt fairly in the question ("de ne pas avoir agi avec loyauté").

I will only add that my remarks, which I gave M. Hartsen clearly to understand were purely academic, were taken in very good part by him.

I hear from the Belgian Minister, who saw M. Hartsen shortly after me, that he expects soon to receive some proposals on the part of Her Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 92.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 6.)

(No. 242. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 4, 1890.

THE "Journal de Bruxelles" of to-day publishes the inclosed letters addressed by Cardinal Lavigerie to the King and Queen of the Netherlands, praying their Majesties in the name of Christianity to put an end to the horrors and misery which the Slave Trade inflicts on the natives of Africa by causing the immediate signature of Holland to be affixed without delay to the Acts of the Brussels Conference.

I understand that the Cardinal has also appealed to the Catholic Bishops of Holland to support his supplication to the King.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 92.

Extract from the "Journal de Bruxelles" of October 4, 1890.

DEUX LETTRES DU CARDINAL LAVIGERIE.—"L'Univers" reproduit les deux lettres suivantes, qui ont été adressées à leurs Majestés le Roi et la Reine des Pays-Bas, à la suite du Congrès Libre Antiesclavagiste de Paris. Nous n'avons pas besoin d'en signaler l'importance:—

"A Sa Majesté la Reine des Pays-Bas.

"Madame,

"Paris, 27, Rue Cassette, le 22 Septembre, 1890.

"C'est à votre Majesté que je viens demander de vouloir bien remettre au Roi, par les mains pures de sa fille, la supplique que je me permets de lui adresser pour le supplier de hâter, par un acte de sa puissance souveraine, le salut de tout un continent, voué aux supplices et à la mort.

"Ce sont surtout les femmes et les enfants qui sont les victimes des maux de l'esclavage. J'ose demander à votre Majesté d'être leur avocate auprès de son auguste époux. Je lui demande d'associer à sa démarche sa fille bien aimée, sur laquelle un tel acte de miséricorde ne peut manquer d'attirer, pour sa vie tout entière, les bénédictions du Ciel. Dieu nous promet de récompenser un simple verre

d'eau froide donné en son nom. Que sera-ce d'avoir arrêté tant de torrents de sang et sauvé d'affreuses misères tant de pauvres créatures ! Or, le Roi le peut s'il le veut, et il le voudra, je n'en doute pas, si votre Majesté daigne le lui demander.

"Veuillez excuser, Madame, la hardiesse d'un vieux pasteur, et daignez agréer, &c.

(Signé)

"✠ CHARLES, Cardinal LAVIGERIE,

"Archevêque de Carthage et d'Alger.

"A Sa Majesté le Roi des Pays-Bas.

"Sire,

"Hier Dimanche, 21 Septembre, j'ai prononcé dans l'Eglise Saint-Sulpice un discours sur l'esclavage Africain, et, à cette occasion, j'ai rappelé que les horreurs qui ensanglantent et désolent l'Afrique, et dont le monde civilisé a décrété la fin par les Résolutions de la Conférence de Bruxelles, continueront à détruire notre immense continent si toutes les Puissances ne se mettent pas d'accord pour y mettre obstacle.

"Je me suis encore permis d'exprimer le vœu que votre Majesté daigne accepter et signer l'Acte Général de Bruxelles, comme l'ont déjà fait toutes les autres nations représentées à la Conférence.

"J'ai rappelé aux fidèles qui m'écoutaient l'admiration que méritent le passé, les sentiments généraux, les vertus patriarcales de la Hollande et celles de son Roi vénéré, si aimé de tous ses sujets sans exception, Protestants et Catholiques.

"J'aurais pu ajouter, Sire, que votre nation est une de celles qui ont manifesté le plus hautement leurs sympathies humanitaires et religieuses en ce qui concerne la triste situation de notre Afrique. Sollicité par des demandes multiples, j'ai dû ouvrir trois maisons distinctes dans les États de votre Majesté pour y recevoir non seulement les hommes qui veulent s'associer à nos troupes d'ouvriers apostoliques, mais encore les femmes héroïques qui veulent entrer dans notre Société de Sœurs de la Mission. Ces maisons, destinées uniquement à recevoir les postulantes qui se présentent afin d'étudier leur vocation pendant quelques semaines avant de partir pour le noviciat des missionnaires, sont situées l'une à Gerra, près de Bois-le-Duc, l'autre à Maestricht, et la troisième, qui s'ouvre en ce moment même, à Marienthal, dans le Luxembourg.

"Votre Majesté verra une fois de plus, par ce simple détail, combien la cause de la civilisation de l'Afrique est sympathique pour ses sujets, et, par conséquent, avec quelle anxiété, comme tous les Chrétiens du reste du monde, ils attendent la résolution de son Gouvernement, de laquelle dépend la fin des fléaux de l'esclavagisme, les plus terribles qui aient jamais affligé l'humanité.

"Sire, si je représentais, à un degré quelconque, les idées ou les intérêts de la politique, je n'oserais pas mêler ma voix à celle de votre peuple pour supplier votre Majesté de terminer, puisque cela ne dépend plus que d'elle, la grande question de l'abolition de l'esclavage ; mais je ne suis qu'un pasteur, un vieillard, et je n'ai qu'un seul sentiment qui me fasse agir : c'est l'amour, la pitié de mes brebis infortunées.

"Nous devons tous rendre un jour compte à Dieu de notre vie.

"Je ne pourrais me résigner, à mon âge, où je vois l'éternité déjà si proche, à me reprocher, en paraissant devant Dieu, de n'avoir pas tout épuisé pour faire cesser de si cruelles souffrances. Et je pense qu'au contraire rien ne m'assurerait davantage la miséricorde du Ciel que d'avoir contribué, d'une manière efficace, à faire cesser les supplices de tant de pauvres créatures.

"Sire, au nom de l'honneur Chrétien, du bonheur de votre enfant, daignez donner l'ordre d'ajouter sans délai la signature de votre Majesté à celles de toutes les Puissances de la Conférence de Bruxelles.

"Pardonnez-moi, Sire, ma hardiesse : elle vient tout entière de vos vertus, de votre bonté si connue de votre peuple, et aussi de la pitié que m'inspirent les misères, les armes, tant de sang versé dont je suis depuis longtemps le témoin !

"Veuillez, &c.

(Signé)

"✠ CHARLES, Cardinal LAVIGERIE,

"Archevêque de Carthage et d'Alger."

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 6.)

(No. 243. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 4, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT has been good enough to show me the revised project of Tariff of import duties for the conventional basin of the Congo, and the Regulations for its application in the Independent State of the Congo, which the Belgian Representatives abroad are instructed to submit to the Governments to which they are accredited, with an invitation to send Delegates to the Technical Commission appointed in accordance with the declaration of the Brussels Conference of the 2nd July, to discuss and fix the Tariff within the maximum limit of 10 per cent.

This project of Tariff, as finally revised by the King and the Government of the Congo State, does not differ materially from the sketch I gave of the original project in my despatch No. , Slave Trade Conference, of the ultimo. Arms, gunpowder, and ammunition, as well as salt and wines in bottle are alone liable to the maximum 10 per cent. duty, and this high duty on arms has been maintained, notwithstanding the protest of the Belgian manufacturers, who export arms largely to Africa, as being a measure necessary for the suppression of the Slave Trade.

The duty on tissues has been raised from 4 to 5 per cent. *ad valorem*, while that on works in metal and wood has been fixed at 4 per cent. All articles not specified in the Tariff are to be admitted duty free. Ships and boats, steam machinery, industrial and agricultural machines, and tools are to be exempted from import duty for four years, and locomotives and railway plant until the opening of the railway. At the expiration of these respective periods the articles in question may be subject to an import duty of 3 per cent.

The Rules for the application of this Tariff in the Congo State appear to be framed with a view to simplify as much as possible the formalities incident to the establishment of import duties, and with a due regard for the interests of commerce.

As an additional inducement to Holland to accept this Tariff, the Belgian Ministers abroad are instructed to let it be known that if the Tariff is agreed to the Government of the Congo State will be prepared to modify certain duties and taxes imposed by their recent Decrees (probably the spirit, licence duty, and the personal taxes), but Baron Lambermont does not think that the King will consent to make any reduction in the new export duties on ivory, which His Majesty considers to be only an equivalent for the surrender of the Crown rights to dispose of the produce of its domains.

It is proposed that the Technical Commission shall meet on the 21st October, but in the event of any Government expressing a wish for further delay the date will be postponed to the 5th November.

Baron Lambermont hopes that no objection will be raised to the proposed representation of the Netherlands and United States' Governments on the Technical Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) **VIVIAN.**

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 6.)

(No. 244. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 4, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT, in reply to a question from me, told me to-day that he had received several acknowledgments of the notification of the adhesion of King Menelek to the General Act of the Brussels Conference, and among them one from the Netherlands Government, though they had not signed the Act.

No protest nor reserve had yet reached him, and the Belgian Representatives at Paris, St. Petersburg, and Constantinople had been instructed, in the event of these Governments contemplating making any such reserves, to inform them that, so far as the Belgian Government were concerned, they could only be deposited in their

archives, and that if the protest or reserve was to be carried further it must be done by direct communication with the Italian Government.

It appears that M. de Giers congratulated Baron Marochetti on the satisfactory termination of this dispute, but that the latter, having already burnt his fingers in representing the Russian Government as favourable to the original proposal of Italy to represent King Menelek at the Conference, inquired of the Belgian Minister whether, in communicating to the Russian Government the Italian notification of the adhesion of King Menelek, he had inserted his full title of "Negus Regenti of Ethiopia."

It appears that this had been done, but Baron Marochetti still doubts whether M. de Giers was aware of this fact when he expressed himself as satisfied with the notification.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 95.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 6.)

(No. 245. Slave Trade Conference. Very Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 4, 1890.

I UNDERSTAND that the German Government have for some time past desired that combined pressure should be brought to bear on the Netherlands Government with a view to prevail on it to sign the Acts of the Brussels Conference, and have only held their hand in order to allow Belgium to initiate proposals for that object.

According to the information received by Baron Lambermont, the attitude of the French, Russian, and Italian Ministers at the Hague has not corresponded with the strong support given by these Powers at the Conference to the proposal for the establishment of import duties in the Congo Basin; but, so far as regards the two latter Ministers, he is convinced that, in the absence of instructions, they have only expressed their individual opinions, and not the views of their Governments, of whose loyal support to the proposal he is thoroughly assured, and he has taken steps, both at St. Petersburg and Rome, to have these Agents put in the right path.

It appears that the French Government are hampered by their dispute with Holland about the Guiana frontier, and perhaps do not deem the moment opportune for employing pressure on another question; moreover, there seems to be some personal rivalry between the French Ministers at the Hague and Brussels, which inclines the former to depreciate the work of his colleague; but Baron Lambermont is satisfied, from the assurances he has received from Paris, that the French Government are perfectly sincere and earnest in their desire for the final conclusion of the Acts of the Brussels Conference, in the framing of which they played so prominent and creditable a part.

The Netherlands Government apparently leave no stone unturned to secure adherents to their cause. I am informed that they offered the Portuguese Government to transfer the whole of their trade and factories from the Independent State to the Portuguese Congo if they would only undertake not to establish import duties there, but that this proposal was not entertained. Baron Lambermont attaches great importance to obtaining the support of Her Majesty's Government at the Hague.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 96.

Baron Solvyns to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 6.)

M. le Marquis,

Légation de Belgique, le 5 Octobre, 1890.

LA Déclaration signée à Bruxelles le 2 Juillet dernier contient une disposition ainsi conçue :—

"Après la signature de l'Acte Général, une négociation sera ouverte avec les

Puissances qui ont ratifié l'Acte Général de Berlin ou qui y ont adhéré, à l'effet d'arrêter, dans la limite maxima de 10 pour cent de valeur, les conditions du régime Douanier à instituer dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo."

Je suis chargé, M. le Marquis, de m'assurer s'il convient au Gouvernement de la Reine que l'ouverture de cette négociation soit fixée au 21 Octobre prochain. La réunion aura lieu à cette date, sans autre invitation, s'il n'est pas fait d'objection de la part des Puissances convoquées.

Selon les vues manifestées au sein de la Conférence comme aussi d'après la nature de la tâche assignée à la Commission, l'assemblée se composerait autant que possible de Délégués particulièrement au courant des relations commerciales avec l'Afrique. Les Agents Diplomatiques accrédités à Bruxelles pourraient en tout cas prendre part aux délibérations de la Commission.

Aux termes de la disposition rapportée ci-dessus toutes les Puissances qui ont ratifié le Traité de Berlin, ou qui y ont adhéré, seraient représentées dans la Commission. Si les Pays-Bas, Signataires de l'Acte Général de Berlin, n'ont pas jusqu'ici souscrit les Actes de la Conférence de Bruxelles, ils sont encore dans le délai utile, et le Gouvernement du Roi, pour sa part, est d'avis qu'il y a lieu de les inviter dans une pensée de déférence et afin de les mettre à même de faire valoir leurs intérêts. Il serait d'ailleurs entendu que la présence des Délégués Néerlandais dans la Commission, à titre officieux, n'impliquerait pour le Cabinet de La Haye aucun engagement quant à ses déterminations ultérieures.

Il a été dans les intentions de la Conférence (Protocole No. 26, page 579 du Recueil) que le mandat de la Commission se bornerait aux tarifications, et, quant à celles-ci, la Déclaration du 2 Juillet ne permet pas qu'elles dépassent un taux maximum de 10 pour cent. Dans cette limite, les Puissances seront libres de proposer à la Commission tels taux qu'elles jugeront le mieux convenir. Pour ce qui le concerne, l'État du Congo, voulant donner un nouvel et irrécusable témoignage de son sincère désir d'amener une entente définitive entre toutes les Puissances, a fait connaître au Gouvernement Belge qu'il consentirait à adopter pour un nombre restreint de marchandises les droits très modiques indiqués dans le Tableau ci-joint et à admettre toutes les autres en franchise.

Les États-Unis d'Amérique n'ont pas ratifié l'Acte Général de Berlin. Par contre, ils ont signé l'Acte Général de Bruxelles, et, par un arrangement séparé, sont convenus avec l'État du Congo qu'une Convention Commerciale interviendrait entre les deux Parties sur la base d'un Tarif ne pouvant dépasser 10 pour cent. Quoique les autres Puissances soient étrangères à ces arrangements, il paraît au Gouvernement du Roi que les Représentants des États-Unis, qui en ont du reste exprimé le désir, pourraient avantageusement prendre part également à l'élaboration du Tarif; cela ne pourrait que faciliter leur accord avec l'État du Congo.

Une clause de la Déclaration du 2 Juillet stipule que "dans l'application du régime Douanier chaque Puissance s'attachera à simplifier autant que possible les formalités et à faciliter les opérations du commerce."

Chaque Puissance pourra appliquer ses propres Règlements Douaniers, mais en tenant compte de cet engagement. Quoique la Commission ne soit pas appelée à déterminer les mesures à prendre à cet égard, l'État du Congo, guidé par l'esprit de conciliation qui l'anime, a bien voulu faire part au Gouvernement du Roi des vues qui le dirigeront dans l'application du Tarif; elles ressortent de la note ci-annexée qui détermine les bases du futur règlement des Douanes de l'État du Congo, et met en évidence la manière large et libérale dont il entend, quant à lui, remplir l'engagement qui vient d'être rappelé!

Le Gouvernement du Roi mon auguste Souverain n'a cessé d'appeler de ses vœux l'entente unanime des Puissances sur une question à laquelle est attaché le sort de leur œuvre entière, et c'est avec une sincère satisfaction qu'il prête son intermédiaire pour leur soumettre une combinaison si propre à lever les dernières difficultés.

Je saisis, &c.

(Signé) SOLVYNS.

P.S.—Si la date du 21 Octobre paraissait au Gouvernement de la Reine trop rapprochée, le Gouvernement du Roi ne ferait pas d'objection à ce qu'elle fût reportée au 5 Novembre, et il se chargerait d'en informer les autres Puissances.

S.

Inclosure 1 in No. 96.

Droits d'Entrée : Formalités.

LE Gouverneur-Général déterminera par Arrêté les règles à suivre pour la perception des droits, les formalités à remplir par les importateurs, ainsi que les pénalités qui seront encourues en cas de fraude et de contravention.

Les Règlements consacreront l'application des dispositions suivantes, sauf les cas de suspicion de fraude et sauf les mesures spéciales à prendre pour l'exécution des prescriptions de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles en ce qui concerne les armes, les munitions de guerre, et les liquides alcooliques :—

(a.) Des bureaux de perception seront établis, dans le Bas-Congo, à Banana, à Boma, et à Matadi ; les marchandises importées par mer ne seront vérifiées par la Douane qu'à celui de ces bureaux où leur déchargement devra s'effectuer.

(b.) La déclaration définitive pour le paiement des droits pourra être différée jusqu'après le déchargement des marchandises ; le débarquement sera autorisé dès que l'intéressé aura fait connaître la composition de sa cargaison d'après les indications des papiers de bord.

(c.) Si le navire contient des marchandises destinées à un port étranger le débarquement de ces marchandises ne sera pas exigé ; elles seront exemptes de droits sans autre formalité qu'une déclaration sommaire d'après les indications des papiers de bord.

(d.) Les marchandises destinées au Haut-Congo, renfermées dans des emballages expressément conditionnés pour le transport par porteurs, ne subiront dans le Bas-Congo qu'une visite sommaire sans déballage et ne seront vérifiées qu'à leur arrivée au Stanley Pool, où un bureau sera établi à cet effet.

(e.) A l'importation par mer les marchandises passibles de droits pourront être déposées soit dans des entrepôts publics qui seront créés selon que l'utilité en sera reconnue, soit dans des entrepôts particuliers que les commerçants seront libres d'établir, à proximité des lieux de déchargement, dans tous les endroits où existera un bureau de perception des droits.

(f.) Les marchandises entreposées pourront être manipulées et changées d'emballage ; les colis pourront être subdivisés et chaque colis pourra séparément être déclaré à la sortie de l'entrepôt soit pour la consommation intérieure, soit pour la réexportation ou le transit.

(g.) Les marchandises déposées dans un entrepôt soit public soit particulier ne seront soumises au paiement des droits d'entrée qu'au moment où elles sortiront de l'entrepôt pour la mise en consommation.

(h.) Les marchandises déclarées pour la réexportation ou pour le transit à la sortie d'un entrepôt jouiront de la franchise des droits d'entrée comme si la déclaration de réexportation ou de transit avait été faite au moment de l'arrivée des marchandises dans un port de l'État Indépendant.

Inclosure 2 in No. 96.

Droits d'Entrée : Projet de Tarif.

Marchandises.	Taux du Droit <i>ad valorem</i> .*
Armes, poudre à tirer, et munitions pour armes à feu	10 pour cent.
Sel	
Vins en bouteilles	
Vins en barils	7 "
Verroteries (y compris perles, corail)	6 "
Tissus et habillements	5 "
Conserves alimentaires	
Bières	
Sucre	4 "
Verrerie, faïence, et porcelaine	
Quincaillerie (y compris coquillages)	
Ouvrages en fonte, en fer, en acier, en cuivre, en plomb, en zinc, et en étain (comprenant les métaux à l'état de plaques, de feuilles, de barres, ou de fils)	
Ouvrages en bois (non compris les bois simplement sciés)	

Les marchandises non indiquées au Tarif qui précède sont exemptes de droits.

* La Commission Technique pourra, quant à certaines marchandises, convertir les droits *ad valorem* proposés en droits spécifiques produisant le même revenu, si cette dernière forme de tarification paraît plus avantageuse pour le commerce.

Peuvent également être importés en exemption de droit :—

1. (a.) Les navires et bateaux.
- (b.) Les machines à vapeur, les appareils mécaniques servant à l'industrie ou à l'agriculture et les outils d'un usage industriel et agricole, pendant une période de quatre ans prenant cours le jour de l'application des droits.
2. Les locomotives, voitures, et matériel de chemin de fer, pendant la période de construction des lignes et jusqu'au jour de l'exploitation.
3. Les instruments de science et de précision ainsi que les objets servant au culte.
4. Les effets d'habillement et bagages à l'usage personnel des voyageurs et des personnes qui viennent s'établir sur le territoire de l'État Indépendant.

L'admission de ces marchandises en franchise est soumise aux mesures de contrôle jugées nécessaires pour empêcher les abus.

Les articles compris sous les Nos. 1 et 2 et à l'expiration des termes y indiqués pourront être soumis à un droit d'entrée de 3 pour cent.

No. 97.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Colonel Euan-Smith.

(No. 116.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, October 9, 1890.

I COMMUNICATED to Sir John Kirk the wish of the Sultan, as expressed in your telegram No. 267 of the 4th instant, to decorate him and others for their services to His Highness at the Slave Trade Conference. The Queen's Regulations will, I regret to say, prevent Sir John from accepting a decoration.

No. 98.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 10.)

(No. 38. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 8, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose the translation of an article which appeared in the "Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant" of yesterday, on the subject of the Congo import duties, and more especially the appeal addressed by Cardinal Lavigerie to the King of the Netherlands with the object to obtain a modification of the attitude by which this country imperils the whole work of the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference.

I beg to call attention to the fact that the writer of the article speaks with great satisfaction of the public acknowledgment made not long ago by Mr. Fox, of the Aborigines' Protection Society, in a letter to the "Times" of the excellent intentions and praiseworthy action of the Netherlands Government in regard to this question.

In to-day's issue of the leading Rotterdam paper is to be found the summary of a letter addressed by a Mr. H. C. Phillips to the "Manchester Examiner and Times," which contains a severe attack upon the Belgian functionaries in the Congo State, and strongly deprecates the imposition of any import duties.

It need not be pointed out that such utterances as these have the mischievous effect of confirming the Dutch in their determined opposition to the duties in question.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

Inclosure in No. 98.

Extract from the "Rotterdamsche Courant" of October 7, 1890.

(Translation.)

THE CONGO QUESTION.—As has been already mentioned (says the "Handelsblad"), Cardinal Lavigerie has published a letter in the "Univers," addressed to our King, in which the Cardinal urges that the Netherlands Government should resolve to sign the Protocol of the Brussels Conference. To this letter is added a short note, addressed to Her Majesty the Queen, with the request that Queen Emma will support the efforts of the Cardinal, and allow the Princess to place the letter in the King's hands.

The letter of Cardinal Lavigerie contains nothing new. The Cardinal expatiates in

very forcible terms on the horrors of the Slave Trade, and calls to mind the well-known humanity of the King and people of the Netherlands. The letter concludes with pressing urging the King, who only has the power, by signing the Brussels Protocol, to put an end to the Slave Trade.

It has been repeatedly demonstrated already how unsound the standpoint is on which the French Cardinal places himself. The Netherlands are not barbarians, who, for the sake of a few hundred thousand pounds, oppose the putting down of the Slave Trade in Africa. They oppose the Protocol because the putting down of the Slave Trade is used merely as an excuse for putting an end to unrestricted trade in the Congo State, which is of such great importance to the Netherlands merchants.

The letter, however, maintains silence on this side of the question. Our Paris correspondent, on the occasion of the Slavery Congress, sketched the Cardinal as a chivalrous figure who recognizes no hindrances in the struggle for his noble object, but who, at the same time, has something theatrical in his proceedings. Such men are incapacitated from seeing the importance of the material difficulties which they meet on their way, and by that means injure their own cause.

That is also the case here. One of the strongest measures for limiting and rooting out slavery is assuredly the progress of the European cement in Africa. But nothing is more likely to work against this progress than obstruction to European trade. The levying of import duties is therefore altogether at variance with the object of the Conference and of the Cardinal.

The Cardinal ought rather to apply to the Government of the Congo State, and to urge upon it to make the execution of the Brussels Treaty possible, by repudiating the levying of import duties, and by that means in reality to promote the putting down of the Slave Trade.

The Congo State, and not the Netherlands, is responsible for the failure of the Conference, at which, in an evil hour, it brought forward and discussed an amendment of the Congo Act.

The Belgian papers express no opinion on Cardinal Lavigerie's letters, and confine themselves to publishing them. The semi-official "Journal de Bruxelles" adds only that it is unnecessary "to point out the importance of these letters."

In other quarters also a good deal seems to be expected from the unfounded accusation thus publicly brought against our country by Cardinal Lavigerie. At least the Berlin correspondent of the "Kölnische Zeitung," who is generally well acquainted with the opinion prevailing in Government circles at Berlin, is confident that the Netherlands Government will now withdraw its opposition. He adds, however, that the question has made no farther advance. No negotiations are being carried on, but the Belgian Government continues to hold to the abrogation of the free trade paragraph from the Congo Act.

The same paper receives from Brussels also some information of the state of affairs. It is said in that paper that the Powers will set down the *obstinate* Netherlands, for an eminent French diplomatist (probably M. Bourée, the French Minister at Brussels), speaking about the refusal of the Netherlands, said: "We will make the Dutchmen pay for that" ("ça en coûtera aux Pays-Bas").

So much excitement is implied in such utterances that one would almost be inclined to think that there were other motives than the putting down of the horrors of slavery. We think involuntarily of what Stanley says in the second part of his "Darkest Africa" of the private trade which the Congo State carries on, and by which that State, in levying import duties, would have a considerable advantage over other importers; also the Congo Act prohibits all differential treatment, both as regards vessels and merchandize.

We can perceive from these observations that the question is far from being so simple as the Cardinal, in his zeal, thinks it to be, and that he has sent his request to the wrong address. And we also recollect that the Netherlands has not confined itself to opposing the import duties, but has even suggested better measures for considerably augmenting the revenue of the Congo State.

Mr. Fox, the Chairman of the English Aborigines' Protection Society, a short time ago openly acknowledged the good intentions and clear views of the Netherlands, after a visit to our country.

Meanwhile, the persons interested are not inactive. As we have heard, Netherlands, Portuguese, French, and English traders in the Congo territory will soon hold a meeting in London to discuss their common interests. If, then, diplomacy has allowed the Congo question to rest for awhile, the subject is still in agitation.

How the difficulty will be solved is still very uncertain. But every Netherlander, not less than Cardinal Lavigerie, would deeply deplore, if the labours of the Anti-Slavery

Conference were to remain fruitless. Our people may, however, with an easy conscience, fling off the responsibility of an unexpected failure.

No. 99.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Baron Solvyns.

M. le Ministre,

Foreign Office, October 10, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 5th instant in regard to the proposed opening of negotiations at Brussels for the settlement of the question of the imposition of duties in the conventional basin of the Congo, in accordance with the Declaration of the Brussels Conference of the 2nd July last.

As you are so good as to state that the Government of His Majesty would see no objection to the opening of these discussions being deferred to the 5th proximo, I beg to inform your Excellency that that date would, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, be more convenient than the alternative one of the 21st instant, and that no time shall be lost in arranging for the appointment of British Delegates.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 100.

Mr. Trench to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 11.)

(No. 116. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Berlin, October 8, 1890.

THE Belgian Minister, whom I met yesterday at an official dinner given by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, informed me confidentially that, acting under instructions received from his Government, he had addressed a note on the 5th instant to the German Government inclosing a Table of the import duties proposed to be levied in the Congo State within the limits laid down by the Brussels Conference, and expressing the hope of his Government that Germany would bring pressure to bear on the Netherlands Government to get them to withdraw their opposition to the imposition of those duties and to consent to be represented on the Technical Commission which is to meet at Brussels on the 21st instant.

Baron von Marschall, though he has not yet sent a reply to this note, has since told Baron Greindl that he considers the Tariff proposed a very moderate one, but cannot give a final answer till he has consulted the merchants interested at Hamburg.

The Imperial Chancellor, he said, would consult at once with the Cabinets of London, Vienna, and Rome, as to the best steps to take to induce the Dutch Government to agree to the establishment of import duties in the Congo, and hoped that the united action of the Powers interested would be successful. The Chancellor was of opinion that the letter addressed to the King of the Netherlands by Cardinal Lavigerie would have a good effect.

Baron Greindl added that instructions similar to those he had received had also been sent to the Belgian Ministers in London, Vienna, and Rome.

This despatch is, at Baron Greindl's request, marked Confidential, and he particularly desires that it should not appear in any Blue Book that may be laid before Parliament.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. LE POER TRENCH.

No. 101.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 13.)

(No. 246. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 11, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT has personally communicated to the Netherlands Minister at Brussels the project of Tariff of import duties for the conventional basin of the Congo, and of the Regulations for its application in the Congo State, calling attention to its moderation and to the simplification of the Customs formalities which would obviate any

vexation or hindrance to trade. He also informed Baron Gericke of the proposal that the Netherlands Government should be invited to be represented on the Technical Commission without thereby incurring any obligation to be bound by its decisions.

Baron Lambermont further let it be known that if Holland would accept the Tariff, the recent Decrees of the Congo Government imposing fresh taxes and increasing the export duties would probably be modified.

Baron Gericke has communicated this information to his Government.

Baron Lambermont is not very sanguine as to the reply of Holland, nor is he quite satisfied with the attitude of certain of the foreign Representatives at the Hague. He said that there was a strong party in France, headed by M. de Brazza and M. Charmes, of the "Journal des Débats," who were bitterly hostile to the Congo State, and who, he feared, were encouraging Holland in her resistance, and though he was aware that instructions had lately been sent to the French Minister at the Hague to modify his attitude and language, he was afraid that mischief had been done. He expressed his strong sense of the loyal attitude of Sir Horace Rumbold.

Baron Lambermont further told me that he had learnt since he last spoke to me that the proposal for the transfer of the whole of the Dutch trade and factories from the Independent State to the Portuguese Congo, on condition that no import duties should be levied there, originated with Portugal, not with Holland.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 102.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 13.)

(No. 247. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 11, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a note from Prince de Chimay stating that, in reply to a telegram sent to the Sultan of Zanzibar acquainting His Highness with the date of the meeting of the Technical Commission appointed under the Declaration of the Conference of Brussels to discuss and settle the proposed Tariff of import duties for the conventional basin of the Congo, and requesting him to designate his Delegates, His Highness has expressed his desire to appoint the two Plenipotentiaries who represented him at the Conference, namely, Sir John Kirk and M. Göhring, to act as his Delegates on the Commission if they will accept the task.

Prince de Chimay requests me to convey the Sultan of Zanzibar's wishes to your Lordship for communication to Sir John Kirk, and to ascertain whether Her Majesty's Government would have any objection to his accepting this mission if he should consent to do so.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 102.

The Prince de Chimay to Lord Vivian.

Milord,

Bruzelles, le 9 Octobre, 1890.

J'AI l'honneur de faire savoir à votre Excellence que par un télégramme du 4 de ce mois j'ai informé le Gouvernement de Zanzibar que la Commission prévue par la Déclaration du 2 Juillet dernier se réunirait le 21 Octobre ou plus probablement le 5 Novembre. J'ai demandé également que Sa Hautesse voulût bien désigner ses Délégués.

En réponse à cette communication un télégramme ainsi conçu vient de me parvenir :—

"I thank you for your telegram. My former Plenipotentiaries to represent me again, and please inform them that I request this service at their hands."

(Signed) "SULTAN SAYYID ALI."

J'ai recours à l'obligeante entremise de votre Excellence pour porter ce qui précède à la connaissance du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique. Peut-être ne fera-t-il pas d'objection à ce que Sir John Kirk remplira la nouvelle mission qui lui est confiée, et

voudra-t-il bien l'en informer. En tous les cas je serai reconnaissant à votre Excellence de me faire connaître la décision qui aura été prise.

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) LE PRINCE DE CHIMAY.

No. 103.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 13.)

(No. 55. Conference.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, October 13, 1890.

YOUR Lordship's telegram No. 58, Africa.

I have consulted Baron Lambermont respecting the probable duration of the labours of the Technical Commission appointed to settle the common Tariff of import duties to be established in the conventional basin of the Congo under the provisions of the Declaration of Brussels.

He informs me that as the project of Tariff has been framed it is not probable that this technical work will occupy the Commission more than a fortnight at most, but that the unofficial discussions on the recent Decrees of the Congo Government, increasing certain export duties and imposing fresh taxes and licence duties, may prolong its labours.

With respect to the suggested appointment of Consul Johnstone as British Delegate on the Commission, I would refer your Lordship to my despatch No. 41, Confidential, of the 12th July last, reporting the King's language to me respecting the proceedings of this officer; and I venture to suggest that if this be the same Consul Johnstone, his appointment as British Delegate would certainly be displeasing to His Majesty.

The German Government have appointed M. Göhring as their Delegate, and Baron Lambermont has expressed a hope that the choice of Her Majesty's Government might fall on Sir John Kirk.

Baron Lambermont has heard that the moderation of the Tariff has produced a good impression at the Hague.

No. 104.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 13, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to transmit herewith, for any observations that the Board of Trade may have to offer thereupon, the accompanying copy of a despatch from Lord Vivian, Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels,* relative to the invitation of the Congo Government to send Delegates to the Technical Commission appointed in accordance with the Declaration of the Brussels Conference of the 2nd July, for the purpose of discussing and fixing the Tariff of Congo duties within the maximum limit of 10 per cent.

It has been decided, upon the recommendation of Lord Vivian, that Sir J. Kirk and Mr. Gosselin, Her Majesty's Secretary of Legation at Brussels, shall be appointed Delegates to this Conference, which is to meet at Brussels on the 5th proximo.

In view of the advantage of having some one upon the Commission who possesses practical experience of the technicalities of the Congo trade, Lord Salisbury is in communication with Lord Vivian as to the expediency of employing Mr. H. Johnston (formerly Acting British Consul at Old Calabar) to render assistance to the Commissioners on these points. Consul Johnston's services would, however, only be available for a short time, and his Lordship is not yet aware of the probable duration of the negotiations.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. V. LISTER.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 39. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 10, 1890.

AFTER dinner at the Russian Legation yesterday evening, Count Kapnist asked me whether any change had occurred in the affair of the Congo import duties.

I replied that, as far as I knew, the Dutch Government gave no sign of yielding in the question; and, being on extremely friendly terms with my colleague, I took advantage of the opportunity he offered me to tell him frankly what I had heard of the effect on this Government of the views which he himself entertained respecting the import duties.

I said that information had reached me from different quarters that the Government had been much strengthened in their resistance by the language reported to them as being held by the Russian Minister.

I could bear witness myself to the very brilliant manner in which he had one day, at my house, defended the Dutch point of view; and the part he had himself taken in the Berlin Congo Conference of course lent additional weight to the arguments he made use of in favour of the Dutch contention.

I said that this seemed to me the more unfortunate as, judging by the Protocols of the Brussels Conference, the language of his colleague, Prince Ouroussoff, was entirely opposed to his own.

"Yes," said Count Kapnist, with a laugh, "that is perfectly true; and so also was the language of our other Representative, M. Martino."

My colleague, who took my observations in exceedingly good part, said that he did not understand how any importance could attach to his views, which were entirely personal, since he was in no way charged to deal with the question here.

I said that it seemed to me but natural that the opinions put forward and ably defended by him should be eagerly snatched at by the Dutch Government, in the position of isolation in which they found themselves.

I had reason to believe that they had derived similar support from others of our colleagues, and had thus acquired some plausible grounds for saying that they are not without sympathizers in the single-handed fight in which they are engaged.

I am almost inclined to think—and this must be my apology for troubling your Lordship with the incident—that my Russian colleague has received some hint from his Government to be careful in his attitude on this question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 40. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 11, 1890.

IT might have been hoped that the urgent appeal addressed by Cardinal Lavigerie to the King of the Netherlands to exert his authority in favour of the adherence of this country to the Resolutions come to in the Brussels Slave Trade Conference would have found an echo among the Dutch Roman Catholics.

Such does not seem to be the case, as would appear from a communication inserted by the Parliamentary leader of the Roman Catholics, Dr. Schaepman, in the Catholic organ, the "Centrum."

I inclose a short abstract of this article, taken from the "Courrier de la Meuse."

It is a significant fact that so thoroughly well-disciplined a body as the Roman Catholics here should, in this question, which is supposed to affect the material interests of the country, turn a deaf ear to the exhortations of a Prince of the Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 108*.

Baron Solvyns to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 15.)

M. le Marquis,

Légation de Belgique, le 13 Octobre, 1890.

EN faisant connaître les conditions auxquelles il était disposé à signer l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles, le Gouvernement des États-Unis a émis le vœu que cet Acte contint une stipulation expresse portant que la République de Libéria serait invitée, comme Puissance Souveraine, à donner son adhésion au Traité.

Mon Gouvernement pense que le Cabinet de Washington serait disposé à prêter ses bons offices pour obtenir cette adhésion, et il se chargerait de pressentir à ce sujet les intentions du Secrétaire d'État à Washington, à moins que le Gouvernement de la Reine ne préférât un autre mode de procédure.

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) SOLVYNS.

Inclosure in No. 106.

Extract from the "Courrier de la Meuse" of October 12, 1890.

LA CONFÉRENCE ANTIESCLAVAGISTE.—Dans notre numéro de Samedi dernier nous avons publié deux lettres de son Éminence le Cardinal Lavigerie, adressées à Leurs Majestés le Roi et la Reine, pour obtenir du Gouvernement l'adhésion au Protocole de la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles.

On sait que le refus des Pays-Bas de signer le Protocole est basé sur l'introduction de droits d'entrée au Congo. Ce dernier point n'avait rien de commun avec le principe qui a dicté la réunion de la Conférence, laquelle avait pour objet de rechercher d'un commun accord les moyens propres à combattre l'esclavagisme.

On a annoncé que le Cabinet de La Haye consentirait à une augmentation des droits d'importation sur les spiritueux et à l'établissement des droits d'exportation suffisants pour couvrir les frais d'administration de l'État Libre du Congo. Toutefois, il se refuserait à l'abrogation de l'Article IV de l'Acte Général de Berlin.

Nous ignorons quelles sont les intentions du Gouvernement à cet égard.

Ce qui est certain, c'est que l'attitude de notre pays se justifie par l'introduction, par la Conférence, d'une modification à l'Article IV du Traité du Congo, qui stipulait la libre entrée pendant au moins vingt ans.

Les États qui ont adhéré à cette proposition ont cru assurer de cette manière au Congo le moyen de combattre l'esclavagisme. Le Gouvernement Néerlandais a refusé son appui à la proposition, et il a bien fait.

C'est ce que M. le Dr. Schaepman fait ressortir dans un article publié par le "Centrum."

S'il était prouvé, dit l'honorable Député, que les moyens de combattre la Traite des Esclaves pouvaient uniquement être obtenus par une modification à l'Article IV de l'Acte du Congo, dans ce cas la Conférence de Bruxelles pourrait justifier sa proposition. Cette preuve n'ayant pas été et ne pouvant pas être faite, notre Gouvernement agit sagement en refusant son adhésion à l'abolition d'un pacte qui a été solennellement arrêté. Surtout pour les petits États il importe de réclamer le maintien des Traités. C'est pour eux une question d'existence.

No. 107.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 15.)

(No. 249. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 14, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 244, Slave Trade Conference, of the 4th instant, Baron Lambermont informs me that, on further consideration of the terms of the Italian Notification of the accession of King Menelek to the General Act of the Conference of Brussels, M. de Giers had announced to the Belgian Minister at St. Petersburg that he was obliged to make reserves to the title of "Negus Negesti of Ethiopia" attributed to King Menelek in the Notification.

The Belgian Minister, acting on instructions he had previously received, informed M. de Giers that any such reserves must be made direct to the Italian Government, as the action of the Belgian Government was limited to the communication of the Notification to the Signatory Powers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 108.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 59.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, October 15, 1890, 8.15 P.M.

CONGO duties.

What date has now been fixed for the meeting of the Technical Commission, for we gather from communications which have passed with the Belgian Minister that a postponement is in prospect.

No. 109.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 16.)

(No. 250. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 14, 1890.

I FOUND Baron Lambermont more sanguine yesterday about the prospect of an arrangement of the difficulty with Holland. He said that the moderation of the proposed Tariff of import duties for the Congo Basin had evidently produced a good impression at the Hague, and he was convinced that the Netherlands Government now desired nothing better than to find an honourable issue from the position in which they have placed themselves, which they could justify to Parliament.

The moderation of the proposed Tariff was some concession to their views and additional satisfaction could be given to them by the modification of the recent Decrees of the Congo Government, establishing additional export duties and taxes.

If, as he hoped, the Powers should agree to a participation of Holland in the labours of the Commission without her thereby incurring any obligation to be bound by its decisions, he should be able to frame the invitation to the Netherlands Government in such courteous and friendly terms that it would be almost impossible for them to decline it, and in the worst case it would still be open to the Powers to give that Government the fullest measure of satisfaction by authorizing their Representatives at Brussels to meet in Conference for the special purpose of modifying Article IV of the Berlin Act.

He had had a most satisfactory interview with the United States' Minister, who had shown every disposition to carry out the undertaking of his Government to allow the common Tariff framed by the Powers to be applied to American imports into the Congo Basin, and he had also received very satisfactory assurances from Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Rome, of the desire of those Governments to contribute by every means in their power to the solution of the difficulty with Holland, and he believed that the German Government were proposing, or would propose, joint action at the Hague with this object.

The French, for political reasons, had always shown great tenderness for Holland, but Baron Lambermont had reason to believe that they would follow England and Germany in bringing pressure to bear at the Hague if those Powers would take the initiative.

He therefore attached great importance to the attitude of Her Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 110.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 249.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, October 16, 1890.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 59 of the 15th instant, I transmit herewith, for your Lordship's information, copy of a note which I have received from the Belgian Minister at this Court,* conveying the invitation of His Majesty the King of the Belgians for the meeting of Delegates to discuss and fix the scale of duties upon imported goods in the conventional basin of the Congo to be convened in pursuance of the Declaration annexed to the General Act of the Brussels Conference.

A copy of my reply, in which it is intimated that the suggested postponement of the meeting from the 21st instant to the 5th proximo would be agreeable to Her Majesty's Government, is also inclosed.†

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 111.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Count Hatzfeldt.

THE Marquis of Salisbury presents his compliments to Count Hatzfeldt, and has the honour to inform his Excellency that from a telegram which has been received from Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels, it appears that the first meeting of the Technical Commission on the Congo duties has been fixed for the 5th proximo.

Foreign Office, October 17, 1890.

No. 112.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 56. Conference.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, October 18, 1890.

IN reply to your Lordship's telegram of to-day's date, the meeting of the Technical Commission has been fixed for the 5th November.

No question has been raised that the meeting should be further postponed.

No. 113.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 57. Conference.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, October 18, 1890.

I HAVE seen Baron Lambermont, who informs me that he has just heard that the Austrian, German, and Italian Ministers at the Hague have received instructions to bring pressure to bear on the Netherlands Government.

Her Majesty's Government will, he hopes, consent to do the same.

Your Lordship's answer to the invitation to send Delegates to the Technical Commission is anxiously awaited, as well as to the proposal to invite the Dutch Government to be represented unofficially.

He wishes to act on it without delay.

No. 114.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 60. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, October 18, 1890.

HER Majesty's Government accept the invitation of the Belgian Government to attend the Technical Commission. Sir J. Kirk and Mr. Gosselin are appointed to be the British Delegates.

Her Majesty's Government concur in the proposal that the Netherlands Government should be invited to attend in an unofficial manner.

Instructions have been issued to Her Majesty's Minister at the Hague to act in concert with his colleagues in their efforts to induce the Dutch to recede from their attitude of opposition.

No. 115.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, October 18, 1890, 1.20 P.M.

CONGO Duties Technical Commission.

Urge Netherlands Government, in conjunction with your Austrian, German, Italian colleagues, or any of them, to consider the propriety and expediency of sending Delegates in some form or other.

No. 116.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 251.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, October 18, 1890.

WITH reference to my preceding despatch, I transmit to your Lordship herewith, under flying seal, a letter appointing Sir John Kirk and Mr. Gosselin joint Delegates for Great Britain, to discuss and fix the duties to be imposed upon imports in the conventional basin of the Congo.*

I have to request your Lordship to notify these appointments to the Belgian Government and to hand the inclosed letter to the Delegates.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 117.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir J. Kirk and Mr. Gosselin.

Gentlemen,

Foreign Office, October 18, 1890.

I HEREBY appoint you Joint Delegates for Great Britain, to attend the meetings to be held at Brussels, by the invitation of His Majesty the King of the Belgians, for the discussion and fixing of duties upon imported goods in the conventional basin of the Congo, in pursuance of the terms of the Declaration annexed to the General Act of the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels in 1889-90.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 118.

Foreign Office to Treasury.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 18, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to state that a meeting having been convened at Brussels, by the invitation of His Majesty the King of the Belgians, for the discussion and fixing of the duties to be imposed upon imports in the conventional basin of the Congo, in pursuance of the Declaration annexed to the General Act of the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels, it has been decided to appoint Sir J. Kirk and Mr. Gosselin, Her Majesty's Secretary of Legation at Brussels, to be the British Delegates on that occasion.

Following the precedent of the Brussels Conference and that of Berlin in 1884-85, it is proposed that an allowance of 3l. 3s. a-day should be allotted to Sir John Kirk to defray the expenses of his maintenance; and I am to request that you will move the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to sanction this arrangement.

In view of the early date fixed for the meeting of the Commission, which is convened for the 5th proximo, Lord Salisbury would be glad to receive their Lordships' sanction as early as possible.

It is not proposed to assign Mr. Gosselin any additional or special remuneration for his services on this occasion, as he is on the spot, and will not be withdrawn from his official duties.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. V. LISTER.

No. 119.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 19.)

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

The Hague, October 19, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram dated yesterday, I have the honour to state that my German colleague, in accordance with his instructions, proceeded yesterday to urge upon the Netherlands Government the acceptance of the decisions of the Conference of Brussels.

The Representatives of Italy and of Austria, having as yet only received general instructions to support the German Minister, spoke to M. Hartsen in the same sense.

Your Lordship's instructions reached the Hague too late yesterday to enable me to act upon them immediately, but I will call upon M. Hartsen to-morrow.

I find that I made an error in stating in my despatch No. 41, Africa, that the Belgian Minister had delivered the formal invitation to the Dutch Government to take part in the Technical Commission.

Baron d'Anethan merely announced that such invitation would be addressed to them. I would add, confidentially, that Baron Saurma gave me to understand that he spoke

in a very forcible manner on this subject, and called attention to the grave risk which a small country must incur when it resists the united opinion of Europe.

He at the same time presented a note to the Russian Government.

Baron Saurma's instructions cover considerably more ground than those which your Lordship has confided to me.

No. 120.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 20.)

(No. 252. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 16, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 210, Slave Trade Conference, of the 8th July last, reporting that the Porte, before authorizing its Plenipotentiary to sign the General Act of the Brussels Conference, had demanded that the letters and numbers which, in accordance with Article XXXIV of the Act, are to be incrustated on native vessels, should be inscribed in Turkish characters, I have the honour to inclose copy of a Circular communication which I have received from Baron Lambermont, stating that the Porte has agreed that the Latin character shall also be employed for these inscriptions, and that note of this agreement will be taken in the final Protocol contemplated by Article XCIX of the General Act.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 120.

Baron Lambermont to Lord Vivian.

LE Baron Lambermont a eu l'honneur, le 18 Juillet dernier, d'adresser à MM. les Plénipotentiaires à la Conférence une communication concernant l'interprétation donnée par le Gouvernement Ottoman à l'Article XXXIV de l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles.

Il est aujourd'hui en mesure de leur faire savoir, d'après une communication officielle qu'il a reçue de son Excellence le Ministre de la Turquie, que la Sublime Porte n'a pas d'objection à ce que, conformément au vœu qui lui a été exprimé, une traduction en caractères Latins soit ajoutée aux inscriptions faites en caractères Turcs.

Mention des explications échangées pourra être faite dans le Protocole prévu par l'avant-dernier paragraphe de l'Article XCIX de l'Acte Général.

Bruxelles, le 14 Octobre, 1890.

No. 121.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 20.)

(No. 253. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 18, 1890.

I HAVE communicated to Prince de Chimay the substance of your Lordship's cypher telegram of to-day stating that Her Majesty's Government accept the invitation to be represented on the Technical Commission appointed, in accordance with the Declaration of the Conference of Brussels, to meet here on the 5th November in order to discuss and settle the Tariff of import duties for the conventional basin of the Congo, and have appointed Sir John Kirk and Mr. Gosselin, Secretary to this Legation, as their Delegates.

I have also informed Prince de Chimay that Her Majesty's Government agree to the proposal of the Belgian Government to invite that of the Netherlands to be unofficially represented on the Commission, and I have let Baron Lambermont know that Her Majesty's Minister at the Hague has been instructed to act with his colleagues in endeavouring to overcome the opposition of the Dutch Government to the provisions of the Declaration of the Conference of Brussels.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 122.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 20.)

(No. 41. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague October 16, 1890.

I GATHER from my colleagues that they have most of them received, or are expecting, instructions on the subject of a joint step to be taken here with the view of inducing the Dutch Government to abandon their objections to the decisions taken at the Brussels Slave Trade Conference.

Baron d'Anethan informs me that he delivered the other day to M. Hartsen a message inviting the Netherlands Government to cause themselves to be represented unofficially on the Technical Commission which is to meet on the 5th November next at Brussels, it being well understood that they would not thereby bind themselves to accept the decisions of the Commission. M. Hartsen, it seems, on receiving this message, replied that he did not see how his Government could accept the invitation without surrendering the principle for which they had stood out. The matter would, however, be fully considered, though, on account of the heavy work which his colleague the Minister of Commerce (M. Havelaer) just now had to get through, he could not promise an immediate answer.

M. Hartsen held very much the same language to me when I saw him yesterday for a short time.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 123.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 20.)

(No. 42. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 18, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose the translation of an extract from the "Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant," on the subject of the conciliatory proposals which have been made by the Congo State respecting the import duties accepted in principle by the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference.

The tone adopted towards these proposals, and which no doubt accurately represents the views of the Rotterdam Trading Company, shows that the opposition offered in that quarter to the duties in question remains as uncompromising as ever.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

Inclosure in No. 123.

Extract from the "Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant" of October 18, 1890.

(Translation.)

ACCORDING to the "Indépendance," the Government of the Congo State, as was already announced by us the day before yesterday, has sent very conciliatory proposals "to all the Powers who took part in the Anti-Slavery Conference," respecting the so-much disputed question of the import duties, upon which the execution of the decisions of the Conference depends. By these proposals the arrangements which have been accepted by all the Powers, with the exception of the Netherlands, have been "to some extent modified, both as regards the amount of the duties themselves, as also the Customs formalities to which importers will be subjected."

If this report be true, it is difficult to reconcile it with what was declared by Lord Vivian in the sitting of the Conference of the 10th May at Brussels, namely: "As regards the amount of the duties to be levied, we believe that the Conference may accept the 10 per cent. proposed, inasmuch as if a lower duty were fixed the greater part of its yield would be swallowed up by the expenses incident to the establishment of Custom-houses and the salaries of employés."

One is thus more and more strengthened in the belief that the proposal for the revision of Article IV of the Berlin Congo Act had quite another object than to provide for the expenses which the Anti-Slavery Act entails upon the Congo State.

Fortunately the Netherlands were on the watch against this. The opposition to the proposal to levy import duties on goods was, therefore, not directed against the *amount* proposed, but against the *principle*. In the case even of a proposal to levy one-half per cent., the refusal of the Netherlands would certainly have been quite as positive.

No. 124.

Sir E. Malet to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 20.)

(No. 125. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Berlin, October 18, 1890.

WITH reference to Mr. Trench's despatch No. 116, Africa, of the 8th instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that Baron Marschall told me yesterday that he had dispatched an instruction to the German Minister at the Hague on the 16th instant enjoining him to recommend the Dutch Government to accept the Tariff proposed by the Congo State, and to urge them to take the opportunity of the Technical Commission, which is to meet on the 21st instant, to place themselves in harmony with the other Powers on the general question.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWARD B. MALET.

No. 125.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 21.)

(No. 43. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 19, 1890.

YOUR Lordship's telegram, instructing me to urge upon the Dutch Government the expediency and propriety of their causing themselves to be represented in some form or other in the Technical Commission on the Congo import duties, which will meet at Brussels on the 5th November next, reached me too late yesterday afternoon for me to take action upon it. The Minister for Foreign Affairs is out of town to-day, but I will arrange to see him to-morrow.

The German Minister having yesterday received the instructions he expected, which were to the effect that he was strongly to press the Dutch Government to affix their signature to the General Act of Brussels; together with the Declaration appended to it, has acquitted himself of the task confided to him. The Italian Minister and the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires, who have not as yet received full instructions, but who had been ordered by telegraph to support the steps about to be taken by their German colleague, spoke to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the same sense as Baron de Saurma.

I take this opportunity of explaining that I find I was in error in reporting to your Lordship, in my despatch No. 41, Africa, of the 16th instant, that the Belgian Minister had been charged to deliver a formal invitation to the Dutch Government to attend the Technical Commission. Baron d'Anethan was only commissioned to prepare them for such an invitation, it being deemed more courteous that they should be apprised of it through him than that they should be informed of it through an indirect channel. The Belgian Government have not, so I hear, as yet received the reply of all the Powers to their proposal that the invitation to attend the Technical Commission should be addressed to the Netherlands Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 126.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 21.)

(No. 44. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 19, 1890.

FROM what Baron de Saurma told me yesterday evening, it appears that he used very forcible language to M. Hartsen in carrying out his instructions, which, as your

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Lordship will gather from my immediately preceding despatch, covered much more ground than those confided to me.

My German colleague called the attention of the Dutch Minister to the serious risk which a small country like this must incur in setting itself alone against the opinion of the rest of Europe. Speaking to him as a friend he, therefore, invited him to yield, while he easily could, with honour, rather than wait till he might be compelled to do so under less favourable circumstances.

To the Italian Minister, who saw M. Hartsen shortly after Baron de Saurma, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he would in due course let him know the answer he would have to return to the note left with him by the German Minister.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 127.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 21.)

(No. 45. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 20, 1890.

I SAW M. Hartsen this morning and acquitted myself of the instructions contained in your Lordship's telegram of the 18th instant.

I told his Excellency that I was charged by your Lordship to invite the serious attention of the Dutch Government to the expediency and propriety ("l'utilité et la convenance") of causing themselves to be represented in some form or other in the Technical Commission which was about to meet at Brussels for the discussion of the Congo Import duties.

I said that an invitation to attend that Commission would shortly reach the Dutch Government, and as I believed it was understood that by accepting the invitation they would not be binding themselves beforehand to the decisions which might be taken by the Commission, I trusted that they would see their way to assisting at its discussions. I felt sure that in tendering your advice to them in this sense, your Lordship was of opinion that it was the best way for them to convince themselves that their apprehensions with regard to the injurious effect of the proposed duties were ill-founded. It would afford to them, too, so it seemed to me, a way out of the somewhat difficult position in which they now found themselves placed.

M. Hartsen thanked me for my communication, which would be taken into very serious consideration by himself and his colleagues. He had not, he said, thus far received the formal invitation to the Technical Commission, but he had seen the documents (by which his Excellency, no doubt, meant the "projet de Tarif") connected with it.

In the course of a desultory conversation that ensued, M. Hartsen expressed some doubt as to whether the Tariff would be made binding for a given period—say twenty years. I could, of course, express no opinion beyond stating that I did not doubt that every guarantee would be afforded that there was no intention whatever to bear hardly on the trade with the Congo State. To an objection made by his Excellency that the yield expected at Brussels from the proposed duties was confessedly so small that it was difficult to understand the importance attached to them, I replied that I understood that, although but little revenue was expected at first, in a few years, when the railroad had been built, and the navigation on the river had been fully established, very different results might be looked for.

M. Hartsen informed me that the German Minister had delivered a note to him on the subject of the import duties which had been supported by the Representatives of Austria and Italy. The German note, he observed, contained an erroneous statement, inasmuch as it charged the Netherlands Government with having refused to sign the Anti-Slavery Act. This was not at all the case. The Netherlands Government had taken the greatest possible interest in the work of the Conference, and had been quite ready to append their signature to its decisions. What they demurred to was the signature of the Declaration which had been added to it.

I said that I was well aware of this, but as it had been decided that the Act and the Declaration could not be taken separately, it seemed to me that the rejection of one implied the rejection of both.

I learn that the Spanish Minister has received instructions similar to those confided to me by your Lordship.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 128.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 252. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, October 21, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 253 of the 18th instant relative to the Technical Commission for the settlement of Congo import duties, I transmit herewith, for your Lordship's information, copies of correspondence, as marked in the margin,* which has passed with His Majesty's Minister at the Hague on the subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 129.

Board of Trade to Foreign Office.—(Received October 22.)

Sir,

Board of Trade, London, October 20, 1890.

I AM directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, transmitting, by direction of the Marquis of Salisbury, copy of a despatch from Lord Vivian, relative to the Commission for discussing and fixing the Tariff of import duties for the Congo Free State, and asking to be furnished with any observations which this Department might desire to make thereon.

In reply, I am to state, for his Lordship's information, that this Board are of opinion that an *ad valorem* rate of 5 per cent. on cotton tissues is not such a heavy duty as to materially interfere with trade in such tissues with the territories of the Free State. At the same time, they would suggest that it would be desirable for Her Majesty's Representatives on the proposed Commission to be instructed to see that any valuation Tariff which may be agreed upon for the purpose of levying the *ad valorem* duties specifically is carefully and fairly drawn up, so as to avoid favour being shown to descriptions of foreign goods against British. It might also be well to endeavour to provide for the periodical revision of the valuation Tariff should it be agreed to levy the *ad valorem* rates specifically, so that the rates eventually fixed by the Commission may not become a higher charge upon the actual value of the goods as a consequence of any fall in prices.

Subject to these remarks, it appears to the Board that the duties as described by Lord Vivian are moderate; and if the above points receive proper attention at the proposed Conference, there will be no just cause of complaint on behalf of British trading interests.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY G. CALCRAFT.

No. 130.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 23.)

(No. 254. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 22, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT tells me that the effect of the recent action of the Austrian, British, German, and Italian Representatives at the Hague has been to induce the Netherlands Government to reconsider their first decision not to take part in the Technical Commission appointed to discuss and fix the proposed Tariff of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo, and he hopes that they may now consent to do so.

The invitation of the Belgian Government will go to the Hague to-night, all the Powers having signified their concurrence in its being sent.

The French and Russian Governments have not yet instructed their Representatives at the Hague to act with their colleagues in bringing pressure to bear on the Netherlands Government, though their assurances fully confirm the attitude of their Plenipotentiaries at the Conference, but Baron Lambertmont fears that political considerations may incline the French Government to hold aloof.

The Spanish Government are acting most loyally, while Count Macedo, the Portuguese Minister here, has given Baron Lambertmont satisfactory assurances of the continued

support of his Government to the proposed establishment of import duties in the Congo Basin, though they have not yet answered the Belgian note.

The Pope has also authorized the Internuncio at the Hague to join his colleagues in bringing pressure to bear on the Government.

Baron Lambertmont hopes that Her Majesty's Government see no objection to the United States being represented on the Technical Commission, though they did not ratify the General Act of Berlin. He would be glad of an early answer on this point.

I inclose two copies of a pamphlet just published here, founded on information supplied by the Congo Government, replying to the protest of the Dutch-African Trading Company against the export duties and taxes recently imposed in the Congo State.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 130.

Réponse au Mémoire publié par la Nieuwe-Afrikaansche Handels-Vennootschap en Août 1890, sur les récents Décrets de l'État Indépendant du Congo. Par un Africain.

NOUS avons lu récemment un Mémoire publié par la Nieuwe-Afrikaansche Handels-Vennootschap de Rotterdam contre les mesures fiscales prises par l'État Indépendant du Congo. Ayant résidé nous-mêmes en Afrique, et ayant pu juger de la manière dont s'y fait le commerce, nous prenons la liberté, après avoir recueilli des renseignements qui complètent les nôtres, de répondre sommairement à cette publication.

Les auteurs du Mémoire affirment que les Décrets publiés dans le numéro du mois d'Août 1890 du "Bulletin Officiel de l'État Indépendant du Congo" doivent être appliqués le 1^{er} Août et le 1^{er} Octobre de la même année, et que, par suite de ce trop court délai, les maisons de commerce qui ont leur siège principal en Europe n'ont pu donner en temps utile des instructions à leurs agences en Afrique; il en est résulté, dit-on, une perte considérable.

Ces allégations ne sont pas exactes; les nouvelles mesures fiscales édictées dans le "Bulletin" d'Août ne doivent trouver leur application qu'au 1^{er} Janvier, 1891, et les commerçants qui dirigent d'Europe leurs affaires d'Afrique, ont un délai amplement suffisant pour tracer à leurs agents au Congo la voie qu'ils auront dorénavant à suivre.

L'augmentation des droits de sortie sur l'ivoire et le caoutchouc doit seule trouver son application à dater du 1^{er} Octobre, mais il est bon de remarquer que le Décret daté du 25 Mars, autorisant le Gouverneur-Général à élever le taux des droits de sortie sur ces articles, a été publié dans le "Bulletin" du mois de Juillet en même temps que l'Arrêté du Gouverneur-Général fixant le taux des nouveaux droits; la publication du Décret eût, en effet, été sans portée pratique s'il avait paru avant l'Arrêté du Gouverneur qui devait fixer et la quotité des droits et la date de l'application du nouveau Tarif. Ces documents ont été publiés au Congo dès le 15 Juin, et les agents-en-chef des maisons établies au Congo ont en conséquence eu le temps nécessaire de prévenir leurs sous-agents qui dirigent les factoreries dans lesquelles se font les achats. Le Décret et l'Arrêté ne pouvaient être publiés que simultanément en Europe.

Certes, il ne suffit pas de se baisser pour ramasser l'ivoire dans le Haut-Congo, et nul n'ignore qu'il faut, pour l'obtenir, l'acheter aux indigènes qui le récoltent; mais l'État a le droit de considérer l'ivoire provenant des éléphants tués à la chasse ou pris au piège dans ses domaines comme étant un produit lui appartenant, au même titre qu'en Europe les arbres et le gibier des forêts domaniales appartiennent à l'État, propriétaire de ces forêts.

L'État Indépendant du Congo pourrait, sans qu'on puisse juridiquement lui contester ce droit, exploiter lui-même ce domaine, et s'il consent à abandonner aux particuliers la récolte de l'ivoire dans ses possessions, il est en droit de leur demander en échange de cette concession le paiement d'un droit de patente.

Tous ceux qui sont au courant du commerce de l'ivoire dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique savent que presque toujours la valeur des marchandises de provenance Européenne (fil de laiton, perles, étoffes, &c.), données en échange de l'ivoire, est démesurément inférieure à la valeur de l'objet acheté; nous connaissons des maisons de commerce qui ont acheté de l'ivoire dans le Haut-Congo à raison de 2 fr. 50 c. le kilog.; le bénéfice est donc presque toujours considérable et permet l'abandon à l'État, en échange de la concession faite par lui des produits de son domaine, d'un droit de patente de 2 fr. le kilog. ajouté à 2 fr. de droits de sortie. Au surplus, les lois générales qui régissent les transactions trouveront leur application au Congo comme ailleurs, et les négociants, contraints

d'acquitter un droit s'élevant à 4 fr. le kilog., offriront un prix moindre aux indigènes vendeurs ; ce sont ces derniers qui en fin de compte acquitteront la plus grande partie des droits.

L'État a ouvert au commerce l'important marché d'ivoire de Stanley-Falls où, à raison de la concurrence que ce sont faite les maisons de commerce, l'ivoire a atteint le prix d'environ 16 fr. le kilog. ; il ne faudra pas longtemps pour que ce prix diminue proportionnellement aux droits à payer, et ce seront encore les vendeurs qui supporteront les charges des nouveaux droits. Qu'on ne craigne pas non plus de voir cet ivoire prendre la route de la Côte Orientale, car le prix de transport et les risques à courir sont disproportionnés à la différence du prix, sans compter que des droits de sortie (15 pour cent de la valeur sur l'ivoire et le caoutchouc) et d'autres redevances doivent aussi être acquittés à Zanzibar.

On se plaint dans le Mémoire de ce que les droits de patente et de sortie sur l'ivoire et le caoutchouc soient basés sur le poids des marchandises et non sur leur valeur réelle ; il est matériellement impossible de faire acquitter les droits sur ces articles en tenant compte de la qualité de la marchandise et de sa valeur ; agir autrement serait apporter les plus grandes entraves aux transactions commerciales et susciter au négoce des vexations sans nombre. En Europe même, les experts d'ivoire ne sont pas toujours d'accord sur la qualité ou la valeur de la marchandise ; comment veut-on que des évaluations soient faites sérieusement à la satisfaction des parties dans le Haut-Congo ? Il suffit souvent qu'une défense d'éléphant ait séjourné dans l'eau ou renferme une fente imperceptible, pour que la valeur de l'ivoire diminue considérablement ; le prix varie aussi selon le poids des défenses. On voit d'ici les contestations sans fin qui surgiraient entre les agents du fisc et les négociants, ceux-ci prétendant que l'ivoire soumis à leur inspection a une valeur niée par ceux-ci. Qui serait juge du différend dans ces contrées éloignées où l'on se trouve loin de l'autorité supérieure ? La même observation s'applique au caoutchouc dont la valeur varie selon le plus ou moins de pureté du produit. Des retards préjudiciables au commerce eussent été la conséquence de pareille mesure, et c'est alors seulement que les négociants eussent eu le droit de se plaindre avec un semblant de raison.

Il paraîtra du reste singulier que les mêmes commerçants, lorsqu'il s'agit de droits d'entrée, demandent l'application de droits spécifiques et non de droits *ad valorem* pour certains articles, alors qu'ils changent d'avis quand il est question de l'application des droits de patente et de sortie.

Afin d'éviter des discussions perpétuelles et d'épargner au commerce des formalités vexatoires, l'Administration de l'État a préféré, pour l'application des droits de patente et de sortie, adopter les droits spécifiques et faire payer l'ivoire et le caoutchouc au poids, sans tenir compte des différences dans la qualité ou la valeur des marchandises.

Les dernières ventes d'ivoire ont servi à fixer la valeur moyenne de ce produit, qui est de 29 fr., de 28 fr. et de 26 fr. le kilog. ; c'est sur ce prix qu'une taxe de 4 fr. est due à l'État (2 fr. de patente et 2 fr. de droits de sortie par kilog.).

Quant au droit de patente de 4 fr. frappant l'ivoire provenant des régions situées au delà de 50 kilom. des rives du fleuve, des rivières et des chutes, il n'est pas à prévoir qu'il sera jamais acquitté, les maisons de commerce ne s'aventurant pas à aller récolter ce produit aussi loin de leurs bases d'opérations. Elles devraient, au cas contraire, demander des escortes armées à l'État, afin de les protéger contre le mauvais vouloir possible des indigènes habitant ces régions, où la puissance de l'État ne se fait pas encore sentir d'une manière permanente.

Le Décret du 25 Mars majore le taux des droits de sortie sur l'ivoire et le caoutchouc à dater du 1^{er} Octobre. 1890 ; ces produits, qui proviennent pour les neuf dixièmes du Haut-Congo, avaient été jusqu'à ce jour et à titre purement provisoire exemptés du paiement de droits de sortie quelconques, sous la condition imposée à l'exportateur de justifier de leur provenance. Cette mesure, prise en 1886, trouvait sa raison d'être dans le manque d'administration fiscale dans le Haut-Congo et dans un encouragement à donner au commerce obligé de faire des premiers frais d'établissement relativement considérables.

Aujourd'hui ces motifs n'existent plus ; l'administration fiscale a été organisée dans le Haut-Congo et il n'y a aucune raison pour que ces marchandises n'acquittent pas les droits de sortie tout comme les autres produits.

Le prix du caoutchouc suit une progression marquée et constante : il valait 4 fr. 50 c. le kilog. au début de cette année et les dernières mercuriales de Liverpool renseignent le prix de 5 fr. 20 c. le kilog. ; en admettant que la valeur moyenne de ce produit rendu à Banana soit de 500 fr. les 100 kilog. (le caoutchouc du Haut-Congo est de toute première qualité et de beaucoup supérieur à celui vendu à la côte), un droit de sortie de 50 fr. les

100 kilog. représente, non pas 13 pour cent de la valeur, ainsi que l'affirme le Mémorandum, mais seulement 10 pour cent.

Nous croyons devoir faire remarquer que, pour la fixation du taux des droits de sortie, on prend approximativement pour base la valeur du produit fixé par les mercuriales d'Europe, diminuée du prix du fret ; si, par exemple, on veut imposer à la sortie 100 kilog. d'huile de palme d'un droit spécifique égal à 5 pour cent de la valeur, on consulte le prix de cette quantité de marchandises sur le marché de Liverpool ou de Hambourg, prix que l'on diminue du taux du fret et de la Commission. Ce n'est pas la valeur au Congo qui est prise pour base, mais à peu près la valeur en Europe.

L'observation faite plus haut au sujet du prix de l'ivoire dans le Haut-Congo s'applique également au caoutchouc ; c'est ainsi qu'à Luebo sur le Kassaï le kilog. de caoutchouc ne coûte guère plus de 50 centimes à l'acheteur : le prix du transport de Luebo en Europe peut être évalué à 1 fr. 50 c. au plus le kilog.

Ainsi que nous l'avons déjà dit, le prix de l'ivoire aux dernières ventes publiques a été de 29 fr., 28 fr., et 26 fr. le kilog. ; le fret de l'ivoire de Banana en Europe est de 20 centimes le kilog. ; en donnant au kilog. d'ivoire à Banana la valeur de 25 fr. pour servir à la réduction du droit de sortie spécifique de 2 fr. au kilog. en droit *ad valorem* nous n'exagérons pas.

En ce qui concerne le droit de patente de 4 fr., nous avons dit les raisons pour lesquelles il ne sera jamais acquitté : dût-il l'être, il ne frapperait que des marchandises achetées à vil prix dans les territoires réservés. Pour juger du taux des droits il ne faut pas se placer au point de vue du commerce tel qu'il se pratique en Europe, mais il faut tenir compte du milieu et des conditions spéciales dans lesquelles se pratique le commerce en Afrique ; un droit qui paraîtrait exorbitant en Europe peut très bien ne pas l'être en Afrique et peut encore laisser de gros bénéfices au trafiquant ; tout dépend du prix d'achat du produit. Cent kilog. de caoutchouc, achetés dans le Haut-Congo à raison du prix exagéré de 100 fr., peuvent encore, après avoir supporté les droits et les frais de transport, laisser à l'acheteur un bénéfice de 200 fr. à 300 fr. (non compris les frais généraux).

Un kilog. d'ivoire acheté au prix de 8 fr.—ce qui est un prix très fort dans une grande partie du Haut-Congo—donnera encore un bénéfice de 9 fr. à 10 fr. après sa vente en Europe, alors que les frais de transport et les droits de patente et de sortie auront été acquittés.

Le Gouvernement de l'État du Congo n'avait pas à saisir la Conférence de Bruxelles de la décision prise par lui en Mars dernier, dans la plénitude de sa souveraineté, de rétablir le droit de sortie sur l'ivoire et le caoutchouc et d'en majorer le Tarif.

On reproche à l'Administration de forcer les embarcations appartenant aux maisons de commerce dans le Haut-Congo à s'arrêter à certaines stations de l'État pour y subir une visite et ce contrairement aux stipulations du Traité de Berlin.

Les bateaux et embarcations descendant le fleuve doivent s'arrêter au bureau de perception pour y faire constater la nature de leur chargement ; il serait matériellement impossible de contrôler le commerce d'exportation si cette formalité ne pouvait être remplie par suite d'une interprétation abusive de l'Article IV de l'Acte Général de Berlin. Remarquons encore que les embarcations sont déjà tenues de s'arrêter dans certaines stations du Haut-Congo pour y subir une visite sanitaire et permettre en même temps aux fonctionnaires de l'État d'opposer à la Traite et de veiller à la stricte observation des mesures anti-esclavagistes indiquées par la Conférence de Bruxelles.

Il est quasi superflu de démentir l'assertion du Mémorandum avançant que les "chefs" qui auraient le droit de réquisition sont parfois des Zanzibarites. Jamais les Agents Noirs que l'État a à son service n'interviennent dans les affaires auxquelles des Blancs sont mêlés, à moins que ce ne soit pour exécuter l'ordre donné, par un fonctionnaire.

C'est grâce aux entreprises de l'État dans le Haut-Congo, grâce à la sécurité qu'il a su y maintenir que le commerce a pu s'y créer des relations qui lui procurent de gros bénéfices ; jusqu'en 1886, aucune factorerie n'existait au delà de Matadi situé dans le Bas-Congo ; aujourd'hui il existe dans le Haut-Congo quatorze factoreries qui disposent de dix steamers pour le service de leur négoce.

Si les Arabes ont été tenus en échec et n'ont pu descendre le Congo jusqu'à la côte, si les indigènes ont fait un accueil pacifique aux trafiquants, si les négociants Européens peuvent dès à présent remonter le Congo et ses nombreux affluents sans risquer de se voir massacrer, ainsi que cela a eu lieu dans d'autres parties de l'Afrique, c'est grâce aux entreprises continues et persévérantes de l'État, qui lui occasionnent de lourdes dépenses et coûtent la vie à beaucoup de ses serviteurs. C'est encore l'État seul qui peut assurer la conservation et l'avenir de ces conquêtes civilisatrices ; il est donc juste que le commerce qui en profite acquitte une faible partie des frais.

Est-ce se montrer exigeant que de demander à toutes les sources de revenu du Congo la quatrième partie du budget des dépenses, soit une somme d'environ un million, alors que les trois autres quarts sont payés par le Roi-Souverain et le Trésor Belge ?

Si, ainsi que l'affirme le *Mémorandum*, l'État n'avait jusqu'à ce jour suscité au commerce que des ennuis et des tracasseries, on ne comprendrait pas que les négociants l'aient suivi dans le Haut-Congo avec une telle rapidité et un acharnement dont l'histoire commerciale offre peu d'exemples : ils ont transporté des vapeurs et des marchandises de tous genres, le tout à dos d'hommes, à travers une région montagneuse et difficile, sur une distance de 325 kilom. pour aboutir au Stanley-Pool, d'où ils sont allés trafiquer dans toutes les régions du Haut-Congo ; et ce trafic a dû être fructueux, car, si en 1886 l'exportation de l'ivoire de l'État ne comprenait que 18,666 kilog. elle a déjà atteint le chiffre de 106,952 kilog. pendant les six premiers mois de 1890. Ce n'est pas la création des nouveaux impôts nécessaires pour assurer la protection de l'État et étendre sa sphère d'action qui arrêtera cet élan en ces pays nouveaux où, dans la plupart des cas, les prix sont faits par les Européens acheteurs.

(Signé) UN AFRICAÎN.

No. 131.

Colonel Euan-Smith to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 24.)

(No. 398. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Zanzibar, October 3, 1890.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 352, Confidential, of the 2nd ultimo, I have now the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a letter received by His Highness the Sultan from Sir John Kirk by the last mail.

It will be observed that in this letter His Highness is assured by Sir John Kirk that, should he take certain preliminary steps necessary to withdraw the reserve under which the late Sultan Seyyid Barghash notified his adhesion to the General Act of Berlin, he will be allowed to double his import duties.

This letter has naturally given the Sultan much ground for reflection, and as (notwithstanding the French Consul's former assertions that Sir John Kirk was mistaken in the representation he made to His Highness regarding the matter) there can be little doubt as to the correctness of the intimation which he (Sir John Kirk) has now made to the Sultan, it seems necessary that His Highness should shortly come to a decision as to whether or no he will avail himself of the privilege now open to him.

The Sultan has naturally turned to me for advice on this subject, but I am as yet unaware how far the approaching separation of the German coast-line may affect the existing Customs arrangements in the Zanzibar dominions.

I would therefore solicit the honour of your Lordship's instructions as to the advice which I should give to His Highness on this very important question.

I have, &c.

(Signed) C. B. EUAN-SMITH.

Inclosure in No. 131.

Sir J. Kirk to the Sultan of Zanzibar.

My dear Seyyid Ali,

Wavertree, Sevenoaks, September 5, 1890.

I SENT you by last mail a copy of the Resolutions arrived at by the Brussels Conference, together with an English translation. I regret not to be able to give you the finished copy of the Act and Protocols as these have not yet reached me from Brussels. I, however, inclose the official letter signed by M. Göhring and myself, and will send the volume of Protocols immediately on its receipt.

Some time ago Colonel Euan-Smith reported that you had received a private letter from me from Brussels, where I was one of your representatives, and he stated that I had been mistaken in supposing that the Conference would alter the import duties. Lord Salisbury has replied to Colonel Euan-Smith that this is a matter with which I have to do as your Plenipotentiary, and I have been asked to write to you direct on the subject. At the time I wrote to your Highness the question was only under discussion, and of course Colonel Euan-Smith was not fully aware of what was being proposed.

The Act and its accompanying Declaration has now been signed by sixteen of the

Representatives of the Powers assembled, and it remains for Holland to adhere. If she agrees then the Act will soon come in force, as all the Powers are now ready to ratify what has been done.

Your Highness will see, in reference to the Declaration which I signed in your name, that it has been agreed that the Signatory Powers who have possessions or Protectorates in the conventional basin of the Congo shall be able to establish duties on goods imported at a rate not exceeding 10 per cent. on the value of the goods at the port of entry. Now your dominions are within the district defined to which this rule applies, and you are a Signatory Power, while Great Britain, the Protecting Power, is one also, therefore, subject to the rules expressed, you distinctly have the power to claim the assistance intended in this Declaration. But, in order to be able to receive this benefit, it may be necessary to withdraw the reserve under which your late brother the Seyyid Barghash viewed the Congo Treaty of Berlin. This, however, is a matter of detail which will be explained to you by your advisers. What I have to do is to assure you that this clause regarding the import duties applies equally to you as to others should you choose to claim its operation, and place yourself in a position to do so by adopting the so-called free trade system. This system, I may tell you, leaves you free to impose produce and licence duties, house (?) duties, &c. But, of course, these may be limited by the existing Commercial Treaties.

The Commercial Treaties, however, cannot stop you from benefiting by the increase in import duties, for, by the XCVIth Article it is agreed that the Brussels Act repeals all contrary stipulations of Conventions previously concluded between the Signatory Powers.

In consequence of this you will see you must be very careful not to sign any new Treaty with any Power unless this right is respected and guarded, for this clause will have no effect in any subsequent Treaty. If, therefore, the French Consul is asking you—and I know he is—to sign a new Treaty, you must look to this and take care, for otherwise you will lose the benefit which M. Göhring and myself have secured for you.

If any doubt should arise as to whether or not Zanzibar is included in the operation of the new rule, it will be clear that countries on the East Coast are to be included, from the words of the German Plenipotentiary in the Conference at the time the change was proposed. The German Representative said that he took a deep interest in the subject, as it would benefit the German possessions on the East Coast.

By withdrawing the reserve of your late brother as to import dues, which was then necessary in order to be able to retain the 5 per cent. duty on imports, you will be able to claim higher dues than you can collect now under Treaty, and, in case of dispute as to territory, you may also claim the benefit of arbitration or mediation, and thus be in an advantageous position.

I have explained this to you at the request of Lord Salisbury. I can only add that, having placed your dominions under the friendly protection of Her Majesty the Queen, you can depend on receiving from Her Majesty's Government the best advice in all things, and especially upon this one, from the Agent of the Government of Her Majesty.

Yours very sincerely,
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.

No. 132.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 257. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, October 24, 1890.

IN reply to your Lordship's despatch No. 247, Slave Trade Conference, of the 11th instant, in which you report that, in answer to inquiries made by the Belgian Government, the Sultan of Zanzibar has expressed his desire to appoint as his Delegates on the Technical Commission for the discussion and settlement of the proposed Tariff of import duties for the conventional basin of the Congo, the two Plenipotentiaries who represented His Highness at the Brussels Conference, namely, Sir J. Kirk and M. Göhring, I have to request your Lordship to inform the Belgian Government that Sir John Kirk has consented to undertake the task, and that Her Majesty's Government have no objection to his doing so.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 25.)

(No. 255. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 23, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT has called my attention to the accompanying letter, published in the "Bien Public" newspaper, the leading organ of the Catholic party in Belgium, replying to a letter published in the same newspaper by Dr. Schaepman, one of the leaders of the Catholic party in Holland, justifying the refusal of the Netherlands Government to sign the Declaration of the Brussels Conference allowing the establishment of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo, on the ground that it involved a departure from the principle of the inviolability of Treaties, which the minor States were especially concerned to defend.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 133.

Extract from the "Bien Public" of October 22, 1890.

NOUS recevons la communication suivante qui sera lue avec intérêt. Elle répond, en effet, d'une manière topique aux objections récemment formulées par M. le Dr. Schaepman contre l'adhésion des Pays-Bas aux Protocoles de la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles :—

"La Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles et l'Inviolabilité des Traités.

"M. le Directeur,

"Le 20 Octobre, 1890.

"Le 'Bien Public' a reproduit, il y a quelques jours, un article écrit par le Dr. Schaepman, dans le 'Centrum' d'Amsterdam, au sujet du refus d'adhésion des Pays-Bas aux actes internationaux, signés par la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles, le 2 Juillet dernier.

"Cet article mérite, comme l'a dit le 'Bien Public,' d'attirer l'attention, non pas seulement à raison de la haute situation politique de l'auteur, l'un des chefs du parti Catholique dans la Néerlande, mais plus encore à cause de la thèse qu'il soutient. Les Pays-Bas sont représentés par le Dr. Schaepman comme ayant été seuls à défendre au sein de la Conférence le principe du respect et de l'inviolabilité des Traités, 'qui est,' ajoute-t-il, 'une question de vie ou de mort pour les petits États.'

"Si cette appréciation était exacte, la Conférence ne mériterait certainement pas les éloges qui lui ont été unanimement décernés, aux applaudissements de la presse de l'Europe entière, par les autorités les plus hautes et les plus respectables, telles que le Saint-Père et le Cardinal Lavigerie. De plus, les Résolutions de ce Congrès constitueraient une menace pour les petits États, et la Belgique particulièrement, qui vit du respect des Traités, aurait eu grandement tort de s'associer à une œuvre aussi dangereuse.

"Mais il n'en est rien. C'est la thèse contraire qui est la vraie. Après avoir lu avec soin les Protocoles de la Conférence, qui viennent d'être publiés, permettez-moi de faire brièvement dans les colonnes du 'Bien Public' cette facile démonstration. La question présente un vif intérêt d'opportunité, surtout à cause de la grave question de principe qui s'y trouve engagée.

"Le 10 Mai, le Président de la Conférence dépose une proposition tendant à abroger l'Article IV du Traité de Berlin de 1850, qui établit pour vingt ans, le régime de la libre entrée dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo. Cette proposition est justifiée par les plus sérieuses raisons; l'exemption décrétée à Berlin n'avait qu'un caractère temporaire; les circonstances qui l'ont fait établir se sont modifiées complètement; enfin des ressources nouvelles sont indispensables particulièrement à l'État du Congo pour supporter les charges considérables de la répression de la Traite, organisée par la Conférence.

"Tous les Plénipotentiaires, sauf ceux des Pays-Bas, donnent une approbation unanime et significative à la proposition. Ils consultent leurs Gouvernements; trois semaines se passent, et ils sont en mesure de faire connaître, le 2 Juin, l'assentiment de ceux-ci, assentiment aussi unanime que l'approbation du 10 Mai. Néanmoins la discussion s'engage. Éclairée par une séance préparatoire en Commission, elle se prolonge pendant onze séances. La question, si simple cependant, est examinée sous toutes ses faces. Les Délégués des Pays-Bas lisent de longs Mémoires; l'un d'eux est Directeur de la Société

de Rotterdam, qui a un commerce considérable au Congo. Tous les arguments sont entendus et rencontrés, tous les chiffres produits et examinés avec une patience et une courtoisie vraiment diplomatiques.

“Est-il équitable après cela de qualifier, comme le fait le Dr. Schaepman, un débat aussi approfondi, aussi complet, ‘de simple échange de vues?’ Si l’Article IV du Traité de Berlin a été arrêté après un ‘mûr examen,’ comment donc faut-il qualifier celui auquel s’est livrée la Conférence de Bruxelles? Que le Dr. Schaepman prenne donc la peine de comparer les Protocoles des deux Congrès!

“Mais,’ ajoute-t-il, ‘la fixité qu’on a voulu créer par un Traité aussi solennellement promulgué et conclu au nom du Dieu Tout-Puissant, dépendra-t-elle uniquement de la volonté d’une majorité?’

“L’homme distingué qui a écrit ces lignes, nous permettra de lui dire que cette assertion nous étonne profondément. Comme dans le droit privé, en droit international une Convention peut très légitimement être modifiée ou abrogée par le consentement de toutes les parties qui l’ont conclue. C’est dans le ferme maintien de ce principe que réside le respect de l’inviolabilité des Traités. Or, c’est ce principe qui a servi, contrairement aux affirmations du Dr. Schaepman, de base à toutes les décisions de la Conférence de Bruxelles. C’est là ce qui explique les longs et pénibles travaux du Congrès : il n’y a pas un seul des 100 Articles de l’Acte Général qui n’ait été adopté à l’unanimité des Puissances représentées. Et c’est précisément parce que cette unanimité faisait défaut sur la question des droits d’entrée que l’œuvre entière est restée en suspens. Si l’assertion du Dr. Schaepman était exacte, si l’on avait suivi la loi de la majorité, eh bien, sur cette question des droits d’entrée on aurait passé outre; la Conférence aurait déclaré que l’assentiment de treize contractants, sur les quatorze qui ont signé l’Acte de Berlin, suffisait pour modifier l’Article IV de ce Traité, et l’on aurait immédiatement procédé aux mesures d’exécution.

“Or, les choses se sont passées d’une manière absolument différente. Loin de porter atteinte à l’inviolabilité des Traités, la conduite de la Conférence atteste un respect scrupuleux pour ce principe fondamental du droit des gens, qu’aucune assemblée internationale n’a manifesté au même degré. Ce fait, d’un si haut intérêt pour les petits États dont parle le Dr. Schaepman, mérite d’être mis en lumière. Je le ferai en feuilletant les Protocoles.

“La Conférence avait à choisir, entre les Pays-Bas,—qui, pour satisfaire certaines réclamations commerciales, demandaient à signer l’Acte Général sans les droits d’entrée,—et l’État du Congo, dont le concours est indispensable à la répression de la Traite, et qui se déclarait hors d’état d’exécuter l’Acte Général si les mêmes droits d’entrée ne lui étaient pas concédés.

“En prenant une décision favorable au Congo, en faisant leur choix, seize Puissances sur dix-sept représentées à Bruxelles usaient de leur droit, et l’exercice de ce droit ne portait nulle atteinte à celui des Pays-Bas de se décider en sens contraire, droit qui était d’ailleurs réservé en termes exprès. Comment, en effet, les Pays-Bas auraient-ils pu imposer à toutes les autres Puissances l’abandon d’une clause que ces Puissances regardaient comme indispensable à l’exécution des autres Articles? Soutenir le contraire, ce serait prétendre qu’une seule Puissance peut imposer sa volonté à seize autres, ce qui serait une singulière unanimité. Le Représentant des Pays-Bas n’était donc nullement autorisé à se plaindre de ce qu’on ne lui ait pas permis de rendre définitif, par l’apposition de sa signature, un Traité que tous les autres Gouvernements s’accordaient à regarder comme incomplet, et à certains égards, inexécutable sans la déclaration relative aux droits d’entrée.

“Il en est résulté une situation sans précédents, et très pénible assurément. Que pouvaient faire les Puissances? Se séparer sans rien conclure? Aboutir à un échec lamentable après sept mois de travaux couronnés de succès? Pas un seul Plénipotentiaire ne s’est levé pour conseiller une semblable résolution. Après avoir épuisé les arguments, je dirai presque les supplications—les Protocoles en font foi,—le Congrès a décidé que les Représentants des seize Puissances consentantes signeraient immédiatement l’Acte Général et la Déclaration, et que le Protocole resterait ouvert pour les Pays-Bas, à la condition toutefois que les deux Actes seraient signés plus tard simultanément par ceux-ci.

“Le délai de réflexion a été fixé à six mois afin de ‘tenir compte, dans une large mesure, des convenances du Gouvernement Néerlandais.’ Le Baron Gericke de Herwynen, consulté par ses collègues, répondit que ce délai ‘lui paraissait répondre au but que l’on avait en vue.’ Puis, lorsqu’au 2 Juillet, le Plénipotentiaire des Pays-Bas eut notifié son refus définitif de signer, le Président lui répondit que tous ses collègues étaient ‘prêts à lui tendre la main,’ et il manifesta tous les regrets de l’assemblée.

"L'Acte et la Déclaration furent alors signées par les Plénipotentiaires des seize Puissances. Mais sous une réserve cependant. Dès le 27 Juin, Lord Vivian avait déclaré que 'sans les signatures de toutes les Puissances Contractantes du Traité de Berlin, tout Acte modifiant ses dispositions serait considéré par le Gouvernement Britannique comme incomplet.' Le 28 Juin, le Président dit 'qu'il va de soi que tous les Articles qui dérogeraient au Traité de Berlin, ne pourraient entrer en vigueur que par l'adhésion de toutes les Puissances Signataires, sans aucune exception.' Lord Vivian ajoute néanmoins qu'il veut demander des instructions à son Gouvernement; 'dès à présent, toutefois, il sait que le Gouvernement de la Reine n'admet pas qu'un Traité puisse modifier un Acte International antérieur sans le consentement et la participation de l'une des Parties Contractantes.' Le Plénipotentiaire de France, à son tour répond 'que la Conférence entière partage l'opinion exprimée par Lord Vivian.' Il n'y a donc pas de doute: l'assemblée décide que le Traité n'aura un caractère définitif qu'après avoir reçu la signature de toutes les Puissances représentées à Berlin. Le Ministre de Portugal le constate, encore une fois, le 30 Juin. Le Prince Ouroussoff répète 'qu'il n'y a aucune divergence de vues entre les membres de l'assemblée sur cette question. Tous, en effet, sont d'avis que l'Acte de Berlin ne peut être modifié que par l'entente des Puissances qui l'ont signé sans aucune exception.' M. Cogordan 'fait observer encore une fois que les Plénipotentiaires Français partagent complètement cette manière de voir.' Le Président conclut 'qu'il ne peut y avoir aucune équivoque sur la question qui est soulevée.'

"Malgré ces déclarations si formelles, si remarquables, les Plénipotentiaires Britanniques avaient éprouvé un scrupule à souscrire un Traité qui, au moment de la signature, était incomplet par l'abstention momentanée de l'un des Contractants. Le 2 Juillet, Lord Vivian annonça l'adhésion du Gouvernement de la Reine, en ajoutant 'qu'il ne saurait s'agir de mettre à exécution l'Acte, sans le consentement de toutes les Puissances Signataires de l'Acte de Berlin,' et il constatait 'que ce n'était qu'à cette condition qu'il était autorisé à signer.'

"Puis, il adresse un dernier et émouvant appel à la Puissance qui seule faisait défaut dans ce concert de l'Europe entière: 'Notre œuvre,' dit-il, 'ne pourra être complète sans le concours des Pays-Bas. Le Gouvernement Néerlandais a loyalement participé aux travaux qui nous ont permis de la mener à son terme; qu'il ne nous abandonne pas au moment de son couronnement, en rendant ainsi stérile tout le fruit de nos longs efforts. Nous saluerons cette adhésion avec joie, et nous espérons toujours l'obtenir.'

"Je livre ce noble langage aux méditations du chef de la fraction Catholique dans la Chambre Néerlandaise. Cet appel à sa haute loyauté sera certainement entendu, et M. Schaepman n'hésitera certainement plus à reconnaître que la Conférence de Bruxelles s'est montrée 'respectueuse du droit dans sa plus large expression,' comme l'a dit le Président, et soucieuse, aussi dans la plus large mesure, de ne porter aucune atteinte à la souveraineté des Pays-Bas, et de ménager leur dignité nationale.

"Il me sera bien permis aussi d'attirer l'attention du Dr. Schaepman, comme l'ont fait plusieurs membres de la Conférence des plus sympathiques à son pays, sur la grave responsabilité que celui-ci encourrait devant l'Europe et devant l'histoire, en faisant échouer par un refus définitif, une œuvre qui compte parmi les plus grandes du siècle, œuvre que le Souverain-Pontife approuve hautement et que le monde Catholique admire. Mais ce n'est plus là une question de droit; c'est une question de politique, c'est surtout une question d'humanité.

"Excusez-moi, M. le Directeur, si cette lettre est plus longue que je ne le désirais. Mais il s'agit, je le répète, d'une grave question de principe, et il fallait détruire une légende dangereuse, malheureusement en cours dans les Pays-Bas.

"Agréez, &c.

("Un vieil abonné du 'Bien Public.'")

No. 134.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 25.)

(No. 46. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 24, 1890.

THE Belgian Minister delivered yesterday the invitation to the Netherlands Government to cause themselves to be represented in the Technical Commission on the Congo Duties, and informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the same time that the attendance of the Dutch Delegates would in no way bind their Government to accept the decisions of the Commission.

With reference to Lord Vivian's despatches Nos. 246 and 250, Slave Trade Conference, copies of which your Lordship has done me the honour of communicating to me, I beg to state that, up till the other day, no instructions had reached the French Minister to support the initiative taken here by other Powers with a view to inducing the Dutch Government to modify their attitude in this question.

M. Legrand, in private conversation with me, seemed to be of opinion that perhaps the easiest solution of the difficulty would be to give Holland what Lord Vivian aptly terms "the fullest measure of satisfaction," by authorizing the Representatives of the Powers at Brussels to meet in Conference for the special purpose of revising Article IV of the Berlin Act.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 135.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 27.)

(No. 256. Slave Trade Conference.).

My Lord,

Brussels, October 24, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a copy of the note which was delivered yesterday to M. Hartsen by the Belgian Minister at the Hague, inviting the Netherlands Government to be represented officiously, and without thereby incurring any obligation to be bound by its decisions, on the Technical Commission appointed to meet at Brussels on the 5th November, to discuss and settle the proposed Tariff of import duties for the conventional basin of the Congo.

M. Hartsen, in thanking Baron d'Anethan for this courteous communication, said that he would refer it to his colleagues, but that he was personally in favour of raising the funds required by the Congo State by a joint subsidy subscribed, in proportion to their respective populations, by all the Powers who took part in the Conference.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 135.

The Belgian Minister at the Hague to M. Hartsen.

M. le Ministre,

La Haye, le 23 Octobre, 1890.

LA Déclaration annexée à l'Acte Général du 2 Juillet dernier contient une disposition ainsi conçue :—

"Après la signature de l'Acte Général, une négociation sera ouverte entre les Puissances qui ont ratifié l'Acte Général de Berlin ou qui y ont adhéré, à l'effet d'arrêter, dans la limite maxima de 10 pour cent de la valeur, les conditions du régime douanier à instituer dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo."

Je suis chargé par le Gouvernement du Roi, d'accord avec les autres Puissances intéressées, d'inviter le Cabinet de La Haye à se faire représenter par des Délégués et à titre officieux dans une Commission qui se réunira à cette fin le 5 Novembre prochain.

La mission dont je m'acquitte s'inspire, avant tout, d'un sentiment de déférence envers le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Roi des Pays-Bas.

Elle est dictée en outre par le désir de ménager au commerce Néerlandais le moyen de faire valoir les points qui pourraient le toucher particulièrement dans l'élaboration d'un Tarif de droits d'entrée dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo.

Les Pays-Bas, il est vrai, n'ont pas sanctionné la déclaration du 2 Juillet, mais dans le but de prévenir toute équivoque et de maintenir toutes les situations, il serait entendu, je suis autorisé à en donner l'assurance, que la présence de Délégués Néerlandais dans la Commission, à titre officieux, n'impliquerait pour le Cabinet de La Haye aucun engagement quant à ses déterminations ultérieures.

Le Gouvernement du Roi à l'entière confiance que, dans ces conditions, le Cabinet de La Haye accueillera l'invitation que j'ai l'honneur de lui faire parvenir.

Un projet de Tarif a été préparé par les soins du Gouvernement de l'État Indépendant du Congo, pour être soumis à l'examen de la Commission. Le même Gouvernement a résumé dans un exposé spécial ses vues sur les points essentiels se rapportant aux formalités de Douane. Ces deux documents ont été communiqués au Gouvernement du

Roi, et je me fais un devoir de les placer à mon tour sous les yeux de votre Excellence, persuadé qu'elle en appréciera le caractère conciliant, et qu'elle y trouvera la preuve manifeste d'un sincère désir de faciliter une entente définitive.

Je saisis, &c.

No. 136.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 27.)

(No. 47. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 25, 1890.

THE Belgian Minister delivered yesterday the formal invitation to this Government to attend the Technical Commission on the Congo Duties. In placing the note, of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, in the hands of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Baron d'Anethan pressed for an immediate reply, but only obtained an assurance that the communication with which he was charged would be carefully considered.

M. Hartsen at the same time observed, with some emphasis, that it was impossible for the Dutch Government to accept the import duties, for, even were they purely nominal, they must, on account of the formalities by which they were attended, press ruinously on Dutch commercial interests.

To this Baron d'Anethan rejoined that, without prejudging the question in any way, there could be no motive for the Dutch Government* not to attend the Commission, where they would have the best opportunity of urging, as they had scarcely been able to do in the Conference, the arguments on which they based their objections to the duties.

M. Hartsen further observed that he had a scheme of his own to propose, which is apparently the same alluded to in the "Times" of the 23rd instant, for a subsidy, to which all the Powers represented at the Conference would be asked to contribute.

The objections to such an arrangement are so obvious that it may almost be doubted whether the Dutch Government are serious in mootng it.

The Belgian Minister asked M. Hartsen whether the subsidy would be contributed to *pro rata* of population, as, in such case, Russia would be called upon for the largest share, while Holland would have to pay scarcely anything.

Baron d'Anethan tells me that he hears from the German Minister that he believes the French and Russian Legations here will shortly receive instructions to advise this Government to accept the invitation to the Technical Commission.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

Inclosure in No. 136.

Baron d'Anethan to M. Hartsen.

M. le Ministre,

La Haye, le 23 Octobre, 1890.

LA Déclaration annexée à l'Acte Général du 2 Juillet dernier contient une disposition ainsi conçue:—

"Après la signature de l'Acte Général, une négociation sera ouverte entre les Puissances qui ont ratifié l'Acte Général de Berlin ou qui y ont adhéré, à l'effet d'arrêter, dans la limite maxima de 10 pour cent de la valeur, les conditions du régime douanier à instituer dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo."

Je suis chargé par le Gouvernement du Roi, d'accord avec les autres Puissances intéressées, d'inviter le Cabinet de La Haye à se faire représenter par des Délégués et à titre officieux dans une Commission qui se réunira à cette fin le 5 Novembre prochain.

La mission dont je m'acquitte s'inspire, avant tout, d'un sentiment de déférence envers le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Roi des Pays-Bas.

Elle est dictée, en outre, par le désir de ménager au commerce Néerlandais le moyen de faire valoir les points qui pourraient le toucher, particulièrement dans l'élaboration d'un Tarif de droits d'entrée dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo.

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dans le but de prévenir toute équivoque et de maintenir toutes les situations, il serait entendu, je suis autorisé à en donner l'assurance, que la présence de Délégués Néerlandais dans la Commission, à titre officieux, n'impliquerait pour le Cabinet de La Haye aucun engagement quant à ses déterminations ultérieures.

Le Gouvernement du Roi a l'entière confiance que, dans ces conditions, le Cabinet de La Haye accueillera l'invitation que j'ai l'honneur de lui faire parvenir.

Un projet de Tarif a été préparé par les soins du Gouvernement de l'État Indépendant du Congo, pour être soumis à l'examen de la Commission. Le même Gouvernement a résumé dans un exposé spécial ses vues sur les points essentiels se rapportant aux formalités de Douane. Ces deux documents ont été communiqués au Gouvernement du Roi, et je me fais un devoir de les placer à mon tour sous les yeux de votre Excellence, persuadé qu'elle en appréciera le caractère conciliant, et qu'elle y trouvera la preuve manifeste d'un sincère désir de faciliter une entente définitive.

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) D'ANETHAN.

No. 137.

Baron Solvyns to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 27.)

M. le Marquis,

Légation de Belgique, le 25 Octobre, 1890.

MON Gouvernement me charge de transmettre à votre Seigneurie l'expédition ci-jointe d'une communication que le Ministre de Belgique à La Haye a fait parvenir au Gouvernement Néerlandais pour l'inviter à se faire officieusement représenter dans la Commission qui se réunira à Bruxelles le 5 Novembre prochain.

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) SOLVYNS.

Inclosure in No. 137.

The Belgian Minister at the Hague to M. Hartsen, October 23, 1890.

[See Inclosure in No. 135.]

Annexe No. 1.

Droits d'Entrée. Projet de Tarif.

Marchandises.	Taux de Droit <i>ad valorem</i> .*
Armes, poudre à tirer, et munitions pour armes à feu	10 pour cent.
Sel	
Vins en bouteilles	
Vin en barils	7 "
Verroteries (y compris perles, corails)	6 "
Tissus et habillements	5 "
Conserves alimentaires	
Bières	
Sucre	4 "
Verrerie, faïence, et porcelaine	
Quincaillerie (y compris coquillages)	
Ouvrages en fonte, en fer, en acier, en cuivre, en plomb, en zinc, et en étain (comprenant les métaux à l'état de plaques, de feuilles, de barres, ou de fils)	
Ouvrages en bois (non compris les bois simplement sciés)	

* La Commission Technique pourra, quant à certaines marchandises, convertir les droits *ad valorem* proposés en droits spécifiques produisant le même revenu, si cette dernière forme de tarification paraît plus avantageuse pour le commerce.

Les marchandises non indiquées au Tarif qui précède sont exemptes de droits. Peuvent également être importés en exemption de droits :—

1. (a.) Les navires et bateaux ;
 - (b.) Les machines à vapeur, les appareils mécaniques servant à l'industrie ou à l'agriculture, et les outils d'un usage industriel et agricole ;
- Pendant une période de quatre ans prenant cours le jour de l'application des droits.
2. Les locomotives, voitures, et matériel de chemin de fer, pendant la période de construction des lignes et jusqu'au jour de l'exploitation.
 3. Les instruments de science et de précision ainsi que les objets servant au cult-.
 4. Les effets d'habillement et bagages à l'usage personnel des voyageurs et des personnes qui viennent s'établir sur le territoire de l'État Indépendant.

L'admission de ces marchandises en franchise est soumise aux mesures de contrôle jugées nécessaires pour empêcher les abus.

Les articles compris sous les Nos. 1 et 2, et à l'expiration des termes y indiqués, pourront être soumis à un droit d'entrée de 3 pour cent.

Annexe No. 2.

Droits d'Entrée. Formalités.

Le Gouverneur-Général déterminera par Arrêté les règles à suivre pour la perception des droits, les formalités à remplir par les importateurs, ainsi que les pénalités qui seront encourues en cas de fraude et de contravention.

Les Règlements consacreront l'application des dispositions suivantes, sauf les cas de suspicion de fraude et sauf les mesures spéciales à prendre pour l'exécution des prescriptions de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles en ce qui concerne les armes, les munitions de guerre, et les liquides alcooliques :—

(a.) Des bureaux de perception seront établis, dans le Bas-Congo, à Banana, à Boma, et à Matadi ; les marchandises importées par mer ne seront vérifiées par la Douane qu'à celui de ces bureaux où leur déchargement devra s'effectuer.

(b.) La déclaration définitive pour le paiement des droits pourra être différée jusqu'après le déchargement des marchandises ; le débarquement sera autorisé dès que l'intéressé aura fait connaître la composition de sa cargaison d'après les indications des papiers de bord.

(c.) Si le navire contient des marchandises destinées à un port étranger, le débarquement de ces marchandises ne sera pas exigé ; elles seront exemptes de droits sans autre formalité qu'une déclaration sommaire d'après les indications des papiers de bord.

(d.) Les marchandises destinées au Haut-Congo, renfermées dans des emballages expressément conditionnés pour le transport par porteurs, ne subiront dans le Bas-Congo qu'une visite sommaire sans déballage, et ne seront vérifiées qu'à leur arrivée au Stanley-Pool, où un bureau sera établi à cet effet.

(e.) A l'importation par mer les marchandises passibles de droits pourront être déposées soit dans des entrepôts publics, qui seront créés selon que l'utilité en sera reconnue, soit dans des entrepôts particuliers que les commerçants seront libres d'établir, à proximité des lieux de déchargement, dans tous les endroits où existera un bureau de perception des droits.

(f.) Les marchandises entreposées pourront être manipulées et changées d'emballage ; les colis pourront être subdivisés, et chaque colis pourra séparément être déclaré à la sortie de l'entrepôt, soit pour la consommation intérieure, soit pour la réexportation ou le transit.

(g.) Les marchandises déposées dans un entrepôt, soit public soit particulier, ne seront soumises au paiement des droits d'entrée qu'au moment où elles sortiront de l'entrepôt pour la mise en consommation.

(h.) Les marchandises déclarées pour la réexportation ou pour le transit à la sortie d'un entrepôt jouiront de la franchise des droits d'entrée comme si la déclaration de réexportation ou de transit avait été faite au moment de l'arrivée des marchandises dans un port de l'État Indépendant.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 27.)

(No. 58. Slave Trade Conference.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, October 27, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 257, Slave Trade Conference, of the 25th instant, a suggestion has been made to me that, in view of the attitude of the French Minister at the Hague, it might be well if Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris were authorized to urge M. Ribot privately to employ friendly pressure at the Hague, with the object of prevailing on the Netherlands Government to be represented on the Technical Commission appointed to frame a Tariff of import duties for the conventional basin of the Congo.

No. 139.

M. de Gevers to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 28.)

M. le Marquis,

Londres, le 27 Octobre, 1890.

JE me trouve chargé de porter à la connaissance de votre Seigneurie que mon Gouvernement, désireux de contribuer autant que possible à faciliter une entente générale au sujet des résultats définitifs de la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles, a sollicité l'intermédiaire du Gouvernement Belge, afin de soumettre aux Puissances représentées à la dite Conférence une double proposition, qui offrirait des moyens plus sûrs et surtout plus en harmonie avec l'Acte Général de Berlin de 1885 que le prélèvement projeté de droits d'entrée, d'assurer à l'État Indépendant du Congo les sommes dont il a besoin pour mettre à exécution dans son territoire l'Acte Général de Bruxelles.

La proposition du Gouvernement du Roi consiste à dédommager l'État du Congo pour les frais additionnels qu'il aura à porter, soit par le prélèvement immédiat d'un impôt de 25 fr. par hectolitre de tous les spiritueux, soit en répartissant, entre toutes les Puissances intéressées au Congrès de Berlin et à la Conférence de Bruxelles, une somme équivalente au rapport net présumé des droits d'entrée en question, calculés sur la base des propositions faites à la Conférence de Bruxelles, l'un et l'autre jusqu'à l'expiration de l'Acte Général de Berlin de 1885.

J'espère que votre Seigneurie voudra bien prendre en considération favorable cette proposition, et l'envisager comme une nouvelle preuve du vif et sincère désir du Gouvernement du Roi de trouver pour cette question une solution à la fois pratique et compatible avec les stipulations de l'Acte Général de Berlin.

Veillez, &c.
(Signé) GEVERS.

No. 140.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 28.)

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

The Hague, October 28, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the Government of this country accept the invitation to attend the Technical Commission at Brussels, on the understanding that they do not commit themselves thereby to accept its decisions.

They hope further that their own counter-proposals will be seriously considered notwithstanding.

These counter-proposals are to the following effect: that each of the sixteen Powers who were represented at the Conference should contribute a yearly sum of 1,000*l.* towards enabling the Congo State to carry out its new obligations; and that, in the event of this proposal being rejected, the duty on spirits should be forthwith raised to 25 fr. per hectolitre.

The Netherlands Minister at the Court of Brussels will attend the Technical Commission.

Two days ago the Russian Legation here received instructions in the same sense as those already furnished to the other Missions at this Court, and France alone now stands aloof in this affair.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 29.)

(No. 259. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 28, 1890.

BARON GERICKE, the Netherlands Minister here, communicated yesterday evening to the Belgian Government a note containing two alternative proposals, either of which his Government propose to substitute for the Congo import duties.

The first proposal is that an annual subsidy, representing the estimated produce of the Congo import duties, after allowing for their probable increase when the railway is opened, shall be raised by subscription from all the Powers who took part in the Brussels Conference. Calculating the average annual produce of the import duties at 400,000 fr., this sum is equally divided amongst sixteen Powers, making the share of each 25,000 fr., or 1,000*l*.

The alternative proposal is to increase the initial import duty on spirits from 15 fr. per hectolitre, as fixed by the General Act, to 25 fr. per hectolitre.

Whichever of these proposals may be adopted by the Powers, it is to remain in force until the time arrives for the revision of Article IV of the Berlin Act, stipulating for freedom from import duties.

These proposals, which the Belgian Government are asked to communicate to the Powers, were received last night, just as the King was leaving for Potsdam, so that His Majesty had not time to consider them before his departure; but this morning a telegram was received from the Belgian Minister at the Hague, stating that he had received "a favourable answer" to the invitation to the Netherlands Government to take part, unofficially, in the Technical Commission.

As it cannot be supposed that the Netherlands Government can contemplate submitting proposals to the Technical Commission, which it would not be competent to entertain, it is presumed here that the intention is that they should be discussed by the Powers as alternative proposals, and that a Netherlands Delegate will unofficially attend the Commission; but this will be known for certain to-morrow.

Meanwhile, Baron Lambertmont will not express any opinion on the Netherlands proposals until he knows the King's views, and has had time to consult his Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 29.)

(No. 48. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 28, 1890.

I CALLED upon M. Hartsen this afternoon by appointment, when he informed me that the Netherlands Government had accepted the invitation to the Technical Commission at Brussels, with the restriction that their attendance did not imply their being bound by its decisions. They also hoped that their acceptance of the invitation would not prevent their own counter-proposals from being taken into serious consideration by the Powers.

These proposals are no doubt already known to your Lordship, since M. Hartsen informed me on Sunday last that he had sent instructions to London respecting a communication which I gathered was in the sense of a proposal for a joint contribution of the Powers represented at the Brussels Conference towards the expenses of the "État Indépendant."

The share of each of the sixteen Powers in this contribution is fixed at the sum of 25,000 fr. a-year, which would produce 400,000 fr. in all, or double the amount which is expected at first from the proposed import duties.

Failing the acceptance of this scheme, the Dutch Government propose that the duty on spirits should be at once raised to the maximum of 25 fr. per hectolitre.

I have the honour to inclose a copy of the Dutch proposals, which M. Hartsen handed me to-day.

The Russian Legation received instructions on Sunday last similar to those addressed to most of the other Legations here, to urge the Dutch Government to cause themselves to be represented in the Technical Commission. The Russian Minister being away on leave, the Secretary in charge acquainted M. Hartsen with the nature of these instructions.

which seem to have been personally confided to Count Kapnist. The French Legation has alone kept aloof in this question, there being apparently a strong current hostile to the Congo State in influential quarters at Paris.

The Portuguese Legation has, I have good reason to believe, worked towards diverting the Dutch trade from the "État Indépendant" to the adjoining Portuguese possessions, inducements of various kinds being held out here for that purpose.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

Inclosure in No. 142.

Dutch Proposals respecting Congo Import Duties.

REEMPLACER les droits d'entrée projetés par une contribution annuelle, qui serait jusqu'à l'expiration de l'Acte de Berlin du 26 Février, 1885, répartie entre les Parties Signataires de cet Acte et de celui de Bruxelles jusqu'à concurrence du produit approximatif de ces droits.

Subsidiairement : porter dès maintenant au maximum de 25 fr. par hectolitre les droits sur les spiritueux.

Exposé des Motifs.

L'Article 4 de l'Acte Général de Berlin du 26 Février, 1885, porte :—

"Les marchandises importées dans ces territoires (tous les territoires constituant le Bassin du Congo et ses affluents) resteront affranchies des droits d'entrée et de transit.

"Les Puissances se réservent de décider au terme d'une période de vingt années si la franchise d'entrée sera ou non maintenue."

C'est en se basant sur cet Article du Traité de Berlin que le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas s'est opposé à l'introduction de droits d'entrée dans le Bassin du Congo.

Le Gouvernement de l'État Indépendant toutefois déclare que la perception de droits d'entrée lui est indispensable pour rendre possible l'exécution des résolutions prises par la Conférence de Bruxelles.

C'est dans le but de rendre une autre solution possible et de faciliter à l'État du Congo l'accomplissement de ses obligations que le Gouvernement du Roi a l'honneur de faire les propositions susmentionnées. La première semble se recommander, entre autres, par les motifs suivants :—

1. Qu'il est beaucoup plus équitable de faire supporter les frais résultant pour l'État Indépendant du Congo de l'exécution des décisions de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles par toutes les Puissances s'intéressant à l'abolition de l'esclavage en Afrique, que de les mettre à la charge du commerce sur le Congo auquel seulement quelques-unes d'entre elles prennent part.

2. Que l'engagement des Puissances sus-indiquées donnera au Gouvernement de l'État Indépendant du Congo une garantie que ne saurait jamais lui donner le prélèvement des droits d'entrée dont le produit ne peut être que fort minime pour le moment, et variable et incertain pour l'avenir.

Dans la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles le produit des droits d'entrée à prélever dans l'État Indépendant du Congo a été évalué à un chiffre de 200,000 fr. sans y comprendre les droits sur les alcools.

En égard toutefois d'une augmentation possible des importations dans l'État il semble équitable de fixer ce chiffre à 400,000 fr. par an. Une somme égale qui serait payée au moyen d'une contribution annuelle des États Signataires des Actes de Berlin et de Bruxelles porterait la quote-part de chacun d'eux à 25,000 fr., chiffre qui ne serait pas exorbitant, et pourrait par conséquent être soumis aux Parlements avec toute chance d'être adoptée.

Quant à la seconde proposition, le Gouvernement du Roi, qui dans la Conférence de Bruxelles s'est opposé au prélèvement immédiat d'un droit de 25 fr. par hectolitre des alcools, croit maintenant devoir la faire pour le cas où sa première proposition ne serait pas acceptée.

Il croit faire par là une concession qui prouve une fois de plus la sincérité de son désir d'arriver à une entente.

M. de Gevers to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 29.)

M. le Marquis,

Londres, le 28 Octobre, 1890.

AYANT eu hier un entretien avec le Sous-Secrétaire d'État des Affaires Étrangères au sujet de deux propositions faites par le Gouvernement Néerlandais, et tendant à recommander un moyen plus sûr et plus juste que des droits d'entrée, d'assurer à l'État du Congo la somme dont il déclare avoir besoin pour pouvoir exécuter l'Acte Général de Bruxelles, je crois devoir soumettre au bienveillant examen de votre Seigneurie un Mémoire que j'ai l'honneur de joindre sous ce pli, et qui contient quelques considérations sur ce sujet.

En priant votre Seigneurie de vouloir bien considérer ce document comme complément de ma note d'hier sur la même question, je m'empresse, &c.

(Signé) GEVERS.

Inclosure in No. 143.

Memorandum.

TANDIS qu'un système de droits d'entrée établi au Congo aurait autant d'inconvénients pour le commerce étranger en général que pour celui des Pays-Bas en particulier, les propositions Néerlandaises offrent des avantages incontestables sous bien des rapports.

Surtout la seconde de ces propositions semble recommandable comme étant facile d'exécution et équitable.

D'après celle-ci toutes les Puissances intéressées à l'abolition de l'esclavage porteraient collectivement le surcroît de frais qu'occasionnerait à l'État Indépendant du Congo la mise à exécution de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles.

En garantissant à l'État du Congo le paiement annuel d'une somme qui équivaldrait largement au revenu estimé des droits d'entrée projetés, les Puissances donneraient à cet État des moyens pécuniers bien plus réguliers, et sur lesquels ils pourraient bien plus compter, que sur le rendement d'un droit d'importation qui est toujours variable selon les circonstances.

En même temps cette solution éviterait au commerce tout danger d'obstruction, et ne serait point contraire aux visées de l'Acte de Berlin, ni aux vues des négociants intéressés au commerce du Congo. En outre, on éviterait la difficulté créée par le fait que l'Acte de Berlin s'oppose formellement à l'importation des droits d'entrée dans le Bassin du Congo.

Du reste, une répartition sur toutes les Puissances intéressées de la somme nécessaire au Gouvernement du Congo, paraît plus équitable que des droits d'entrée, car l'intérêt que toutes les Puissances Signataires de l'Acte de Berlin doivent porter à l'abolition de l'esclavage doit bien être le même.

D'un autre côté, les intérêts commerciaux de ces Puissances sont bien différents : les uns n'en ont point du tout, tandis que presque trois quarts du commerce du Congo se trouve entre les mains de sujets Néerlandais.

En admettant que les appréhensions des intéressés Néerlandais soient exactes et que l'imposition de droits d'entrée porte un coup mortel au commerce du Congo, pourquoi les Pays-Bas seraient-ils la seule victime ?

Et même si les droits d'entrée projetés n'avaient pour effet que d'arrêter ou de ralentir le développement du commerce, pourquoi encore les Pays-Bas seuls en subiraient-ils les désavantages ?

Les intérêts de l'État du Congo lui-même ont souvent été mis en avant au cours des récentes discussions. Néanmoins tous les experts, et tous les hommes d'état compétents réunis au Congrès de Berlin s'accordent et s'accordaient à dire que l'imposition de droits d'entrée ferait plus de mal que de bien à ce pays.

Ensuite, au point de vue de l'équité, il semble qu'on pourrait bien prendre en considération les intérêts Néerlandais dans une cause, où le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas s'est efforcé de prévenir les Puissances contre une mesure aussi nuisible en général, que pour l'État du Congo lui-même.

Enfin, qu'importerait-il aux différentes Puissances intéressées de sacrifier, pendant une quinzaine d'années à un but aussi philanthropique que l'abolition de l'esclavage, une somme qui ne dépasserait certes pas 10,000 fl. à 20,000 fl. (800l. à 1,600l.) ? Y aurait-il un Parlement qui refuserait cette somme ? Le "Times" a même déjà exprimé comme

son opinion que le Parlement Britannique voterait les sommes requises à une majorité écrasante !

No. 144.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 29.)

(No. 59. Slave Trade Conference.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, October 29, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 259, Slave Trade Conference, of yesterday's date, reporting the proposals which the Netherlands Government desire to be substituted for the proposed import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo, I have the honour to state that the answer of the Netherlands Government to the Belgian note, inviting them to be represented, unofficially and conditionally, on the Technical Commission appointed to meet here on the 5th proximo, is to the effect that although these counter-proposals might be held to dispense with the necessity for the attendance of a Netherlands Delegate, still, out of deference to the views of the Powers and in proof of the conciliatory spirit with which they are animated, they will send Delegates unofficially to the Commission, provided it be distinctly understood that the Cabinet of the Hague is in no way pledged by such participation to the decisions of the Commission, and that meanwhile the Netherlands counter-proposals would be seriously discussed by the Powers, and not by the Commission.

No. 145.

M. de Gevers to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 29.)

M. le Marquis,

Londres, le 29 Octobre, 1890.

D'ORDRE de mon Gouvernement j'ai l'honneur de transmettre sous ce pli à votre Seigneurie le texte de la dernière proposition Néerlandaise au sujet de la question du Congo, accompagnée d'un Exposé des Motifs.

Votre Seigneurie y verra que cette proposition est formulée différemment de ce qu'elle l'était, lorsque j'ai eu l'honneur d'en faire la première communication à votre Seigneurie en date du 27 Octobre dernier, et que l'impôt de 25 fr. par hectolitre à prélever de tous les spiritueux devient maintenant une mesure subsidiaire à la contribution générale des Puissances.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) GEVERS

Inclosure in No. 145.

Dutch Proposals respecting Congo Import Duties.

[See Inclosure in No. 142.]

No. 146.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 30.)

(No. 260. Slave Trade Conference.)
My Lord,

Brussels, October 29, 1890.

I ASKED Baron Lambermont to-day whether he could reconcile the putting forward by the Dutch Government of proposals which they desired to substitute for the Congo import duties, as reported in my despatch No. 259 of yesterday, with their acceptance of the invitation to be represented unofficially on the Technical Commission appointed to settle these duties, as reported in my telegram of to-day.

Baron Lambermont said that the action of the Dutch Government certainly seemed illogical, but that he had no doubt as to the course to be pursued. The Commission, which was the legitimate offspring of the Conference, and to which all the Powers had now consented to send Delegates, should meet on the date agreed on and proceed with its labours. The Dutch counter-proposals might, meanwhile, be considered by the Powers.

but the Commission would have nothing to do with them, and if, as he hoped, it should succeed in arranging a Tariff which would satisfy even the Dutch by its moderation, and if, at the same time, the increased export duties and fresh taxes to which so much exception had been taken, were modified, he by no means despaired of the Dutch coming in to the arrangement, especially if, as he thought possible, their counter-proposals were found unacceptable. He even hinted that the operation of the Tariff might be postponed for a certain time if it would conciliate the Dutch Government. He did not think that any Power could possibly make these counter-proposals a pretext for abstaining from taking part in the Commission.

He thought that the acceptance of the invitation by the Dutch Government on the conditions specified in the Belgian note was decidedly a favourable symptom, which he attributed to the pressure of the Powers at the Hague.

It was the intention of the Belgian Government to communicate the Dutch counter-proposals to the Powers, without, for the present at all events, expressing any opinion on them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 147.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 31.)

(No. 20. Africa.)

My Lord,

Therapia, October 15, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 17, Africa, of the 10th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation of the Circular (respecting Black slaves accompanying their masters, and represented as domestic servants) addressed on the 27th September (8th October) last to the Governors-General and Governors of the provinces, and to which Saïd Pasha referred in the note, of which a copy accompanied that despatch.

Mr. Marinitch, whose acquaintance with the details of this question is well-known to your Lordship, is of opinion that the decision arrived at unhesitatingly by the Sublime Porte in this matter is a very important one, and he believes that it will, if honestly and earnestly put into execution, be efficacious in putting a stop to the African Slave Trade in Turkey, and to the abuses by which it is facilitated.

I have sent copies of the Turkish text of this Circular to Her Majesty's Consular Representatives in Tripoli of Barbary, Benghazi, Hodeidah, Jeddah, Crete, and Salonica, those ports and provinces being the ones in which the abuses aimed at by the Circular are most frequent.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 147.

Circular addressed by the Minister of the Interior to the Governor-General and Governors of the Provinces in the Ottoman Empire on the 27th September, 1890.

(Translation.)

THE Council of Ministers has under its consideration the note addressed by the British Embassy to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, stating that abuses are occurring in connection with the certificates which, according to the Convention signed between the Imperial Ottoman and British Governments for the suppression of African Slave Trade, Black slaves when accompanying their masters or mistresses as domestic servants, should be provided with when being exported from the Ottoman Empire, and that in consequence of such abuses, many slaves are conveyed by land or embarked from Tripoli of Barbary, Bengazi, Jeddah, and Hodeidah harbours on board the Mahsoussé Company's steamers, exported to Constantinople and other places in the Imperial Ottoman Empire, and secretly sold.

Under these circumstances, the British Embassy suggest that a rule should be adopted, according to which, unless the most careful inquiries are made, no African should be allowed to be exported or embarked.

Whereas, the Imperial Ottoman Government considers it very important that the African Slave Trade should be stopped, and whereas the other Governments have organized an active and strict supervision in this matter, the Sublime Porte can no longer allow that when African slaves are being exported, as explained in the above note, such abuses should occur in connection with the certificates to be found in their possession, and thus many African slaves should be conveyed here and there, and sold as heretofore.

In consequence, the Council of Ministers considered the advisability of sending positive instructions as required to the vilayets, in order that the strictest vigilance should be constantly exercised with a view to prevent the exportation of African slaves by fraud.

A Vizirial letter having conveyed the above-mentioned instructions to my Department, you are requested to carry them out and to prevent in future proceedings which may be contrary to the decision arrived at on this subject by the Sublime Porte.

No. 148.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 31.)

(No. 22. Africa. Secret.)

My Lord,

Therapia, October 17, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a Confidential Circular addressed on the 17th (29th) ultimo by Munir Pasha, Minister of the Interior, to the Minister of Police, the Prefect of Stamboul, and the Valis throughout the Empire. This document, which was obtained in a manner which renders its publication impossible, draws attention to the necessity of a strict observance of the Laws prohibiting the Slave Trade, so as to avoid giving the slightest pretext for an intervention by the Powers in virtue of Article LXII of the modified General Act of the Brussels Conference, and at the same time to the expediency of counteracting the proselytism of European missionaries in Mahommedan Central Africa, by the dispatch of Moslem missionaries, and the foundation of training schools in suitable places. Its issue would tend to show that His Majesty the Sultan is fully clear to the responsibility accruing to him by his adhesion to the Brussels General Act.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

Inclosure in No. 148.

Confidential Circular sent by the Ottoman Minister of the Interior on September 17 (29), 1890, to the Valis, the Prefect of Stamboul, and the Minister of Police.

(Translation.)

WHEREAS Article LXII of the modified General Act drawn up at the Brussels Conference which was charged to discuss the means of putting a stop to the African Slave Trade, states that the Contracting Powers will exercise the strictest supervision in all places where the importation, transit, and exportation of African domestic slaves is carried on, there is reason to expect that Contracting Powers, under the pretext of exercising supervision by sea to prevent Slave Trade, will go as far even as sending a squadron to those localities.

It is therefore necessary to pay the greatest attention to the maintenance of the provisions of the law enacted by the Imperial Ottoman Government in virtue of which the Slave Trade in every part of His Imperial Majesty's dominions is forbidden, with a view to avoid giving the slightest reason for the intervention of the Contracting Powers.

Moreover, in view of the fact that in the General Act it is laid down that the Contracting Powers will afford protection to the missionaries who may go to places where Slave Trade is being carried on, and that they will facilitate in their own possessions the establishment of special asylums for women and training schools for emancipated children, and in view also of the fact that the greater portion of the inhabitants of East Africa are Mahommedans, and it is laid down in the said General Act that the Imperial Ottoman Government shall also take advantage of what its own interests require, the question was discussed in the Council of Ministers whether in order to maintain the religious ties of the inhabitants of the Soudan and Bornu, and by this means save the Mussulman inhabitants of the other parts of Africa from the attempts of certain European missionaries to seduce them from their religious belief, it would be advisable to send preachers to suitable localities in

Africa and establish, in the name of Islam, in necessary places, asylums and training schools. The Council of Ministers decided to send categorical instructions to the Minister of Marine and other Departments concerned to exercise the greatest vigilance in maintaining the enactments of the Imperial Law for the prevention of Slave Trade drawn up in pursuance of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan's commands, and in view of the great importance of founding asylums and training schools and dispatching preachers to preserve African Mussulmans in their faith, the Council, after communicating with the Departments concerned, also decided to submit the proposal to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, who sanctioned it by an Imperial Iradé.

The Grand Vizier has informed me that the matter was accordingly communicated to the Minister of Marine and the Sheikh-ul-Blamate. His Highness the Grand Vizier furthermore transmitted to me a "teskére" enjoining upon you to use all possible vigilance in carrying out the enactments of the Imperial Law forbidding the Slave Trade.

In consequence, your Excellency, in conformity with the Imperial Iradé, is called upon to take all the necessary measures in order to strictly maintain the provisions of the above-mentioned Law.

No. 149.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 31.)

(No. 257. Slave Trade Conference. Very Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 25, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT is very far from sanguine as to the prospect of the Netherlands Government accepting the Belgian invitation to take part, unofficially and conditionally, in the Congo Duties Commission, except under reserves and conditions which could not be admitted, and many of my colleagues here take the same desponding view.

Baron Lambermont considers, however, that it would be a mistake to treat the refusal of the Netherlands Government to take part in the Commission as implying a final refusal to sign the Acts of the Conference, for which a term of two months will still be open to them; and he is of opinion that the Commission should proceed with its labours, even though no Representative of the Netherlands should attend it.

The obstinacy of the Netherlands Government is generally attributed here to the wavering attitude of France and Russia, which has undoubtedly encouraged it to persist in its resistance, and the present attitude of France is the more incomprehensible when contrasted with the language of her First Plenipotentiary at the Conference, who, after having had full opportunity to consult his Government, and speaking with their authority, posed as the foremost champion of the proposal to allow the establishment of import duties in the Congo Basin, while the Russian Plenipotentiaries also strongly supported it. (See Protocole No. 18.)

The representations made by the Belgian Ministers to the French and Russian Governments have elicited apparently satisfactory assurances from both Governments that instructions would be sent to their Representatives at the Hague to modify their attitude and language, but these instructions would appear to have produced very little effect, while it is evident that neither the French nor the Russian Governments have as yet taken any active part in bringing pressure to bear on the Netherlands Government, and it appears very doubtful whether they will do so.

The actual position appears to be that an unpopular Ministry in Holland, whose position was very critical, unexpectedly finds itself in sympathy with the country on this question, and discovers, moreover, that two of the Great Powers are not wholly agreed with the others.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that it should take advantage of this combination of circumstances to strengthen its position and extricate itself from its difficulties, even at the risk of wrecking a work in which its interest has been guided by commercial rather than by humanitarian considerations.

I have earnestly urged on Baron Lambermont that it would be deplorable to allow the work of the Conference to be wrecked on such petty grounds, and that if, notwithstanding every effort, Holland should remain obdurate in her refusal to sign the Declaration, I thought the King might come forward and withdraw the Declaration, contenting himself with the duties on spirits and arms secured to him by the General Act.

Baron Lambermont said that he had already sounded the King on this point, and that His Majesty has replied that, having solemnly declared at the Conference through his

Plenipotentiaries that he could not honestly undertake the onerous obligations for the suppression of the Slave Trade imposed on him by the General Act unless fresh resources were granted to him, he could not retract this Declaration, which was a true representation of facts, and that if the Powers were unable to assist him, he must repudiate any responsibility for the consequences.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 150.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 31.)

(No. 142. Africa.)

My Lord,

Paris, October 30, 1890.

M. RIBOT informed me yesterday that Holland has agreed to be represented at the Technical Conference which is to meet at Brussels on the 5th of next month for the settlement of the Congo Customs Tariff, in accordance with the decision of the Anti-Slave Trade Congress.

His Excellency further said he had reason to believe that the Dutch Government will be satisfied with a reduction of the export duties, which, in his opinion, might be accorded. He had heard, however, from Baron Beyens that a proposal, of which the Baron's explanation had not been quite intelligible to him, was likely to be made by Belgium for replacing the increased Customs revenue by direct contributions to the resources of the Congo State from the other Powers interested in the suppression of the Slave Trade.

I have, &c.
(Signed) LYTTON.

No. 151.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 262. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 31, 1890.

PROTOCOLS Nos. 25, 26, and 30, recording the discussion in Conference of the Declaration authorizing the establishment of import duties within a maximum limit of 10 per cent. in the conventional basin of the Congo, and the preparation of a Tariff system by a Technical Commission, show that the following questions were raised in the course of the discussion on which it might be well that our Delegates should receive instructions:—

1. Whether the decisions of the Commission should be adopted by a majority of votes, or whether they must be unanimous.

The ruling of the President then was, and his opinion still is, that the Commission being international, unanimity is necessary, and it seems to me that it would be difficult to impose a Tariff on any Power against its will; on the other hand there might be great difficulty in securing unanimity on all points; but if the question should be raised in the Commission, the President, being of opinion that the question is more or less a political one which it is beyond its competence to decide, will refer to his ruling in Conference.

The French Government, moreover, have insisted in their letter accepting the invitation to take part in the Commission, that the decisions must be unanimous on all points.

2. Should the deliberations of the Commission be based on the adoption of a common Tariff by all the Powers having possessions in the conventional basin of the Congo, or should each of these Powers have the right to frame its own Tariff at its will within the maximum limit of 10 per cent.?

On this point considerable difference of opinion prevailed in the Conference, France and Portugal raising objections to the principle of a common Tariff, while the British Plenipotentiaries supported it on the ground that independent Tariffs might lead to differential treatment, and to each State favouring its own imports. Eventually the question was left open, and the Commission was authorized to discuss "the conditions of the Customs system to be established in the Congo Basin," instead of "the bases of a common Tariff."

No. 150*.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 261. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, October 30, 1890.

M. ÉMILE BANNING, Librarian and Archivist of the Foreign Office and Second Belgian Plenipotentiary at the Brussels Conference, has sent me the accompanying copies of a paper which he lately presented to the Royal Academy of Belgium, containing a clear and concise statement of the origin and acts of the Brussels Conference, in which he played a prominent part.

M. Banning destines one of these copies, specially, for your Lordship, and the other for the Foreign Office.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN

Inclosure in No. 150*.

LA CONFÉRENCE DE BRUXELLES: SON ORIGINE ET SES ACTES.

*Communication faite à l'Académie Royale de Belgique dans la Séance du 13 Octobre, 1890,
par É. Banning, Membre Correspondant.*

The project of Tariff now before the Powers, which will be submitted to the Commission, has been framed with a view to its common application throughout the conventional basin of the Congo; and in acknowledging its receipt and undertaking to consider it, the Portuguese Government have intimated no intention of again claiming to establish an independent Tariff in their own possessions; but the French Government have distinctly stated in their reply that if the question of a common Tariff is again raised in Commission, it can only be decided by an unanimous agreement, in default of which each Power should be free to impose such duties as it may think proper within the maximum 10 per cent., the resolution of the majority only serving as an indication of the views of the Commission.

It appears to me, however, and Baron Lambermont agrees, that unless the Tariff or Tariffs to be applied throughout the Congo Basin are to be submitted to the Commission, the object for which it was appointed will not be attained.

3. A question arose as to what would happen if the Technical Commission should fail to arrive at an agreement as to the Tariff system to be applied in the conventional basin, before the date fixed for the ratification of the General Act and Declaration. The Plenipotentiaries of Portugal and the Congo State maintained that in such case each Power would have the right to establish provisionally its own Tariff of import duties within the maximum limit of 10 per cent., until a final agreement could be come to. We objected to this proposal, pointing out that its effect would be that if one Power should disagree, all the Powers would be enabled to impose any duties they chose within the maximum limit, which would in fact constitute a premium to resistance on the part of any Power desiring to insist on Tariff autonomy.

Our objection was partially met by a compromise proposed by the French Plenipotentiary, and accepted by the rest of the Conference, to the effect that such Tariff duties as had been settled by the Commission should be applied in the Congo Basin, and that with respect to points on which it could not come to an agreement, duties might be provisionally levied within the 10 per cent. maximum pending a final agreement. We reserved the consent of Her Majesty's Government to this compromise, and submitted it for your Lordship's consideration in my despatch No. 199 of the 28th June last, to which no reply has been returned.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 152.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 49. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, October 31, 1890.

THE Russian Minister returned here yesterday for a few hours from Paris (where he is at present staying), with the object of acquitting himself of the commission with which he had been charged on the subject of the Congo duties.

He was so good as to call upon me, and to say that, knowing I had taken some interest in the matter, he thought I might like to be informed of the exact nature of his instructions.

It seems that he received a private letter from M. de Giers, in which he was requested to take a fitting opportunity of approaching the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the question of the proposed duties.

The Russian Government, having themselves signed both the General Act of Brussels and the Declaration attached to it, evidently could not advise the Dutch Government not to agree to the imposition of the duties.

Russia had attended the Conference purely with a view to contribute to a work of general interest to the human race, and she would regret that any obstacle should stand in the way of the accomplishment of that work.

At the same time, Holland had unquestionably material interests at stake, and was alone competent to determine what course it would be right for her to follow. In his language, therefore, the Russian Minister must be careful to mark that he was only offering friendly advice in a strictly unofficial form, and should avoid anything that might have the semblance of pressure.

Count Kapnist accordingly carried out his instructions yesterday morning. He says that he was met by M. Hartsen with the same well-known arguments and objections, and found him imbued with the same suspicion of some sinister design which the

Belgian Government entertain in this affair, and which is only masked by the Congo duties. The yield of those duties would be confessedly so small, that it was impossible not to fear that the insistence upon them concealed an *arrière-pensée*. My colleague agreed with me in thinking that it was fortunate that the Dutch Government had consented to assist at the deliberations of the Technical Commission, as they would thus have the best opportunity of ridding themselves of any erroneous impressions they might have acquired.

He added that, on the whole, he had noticed a more conciliatory spirit ("une certaine détente"), in M. Hartsen, who had assured him of his great anxiety to bring the affair to a satisfactory conclusion.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 153.

Imperial British East Africa Company to Foreign Office.—(Received November 1.)

Sir,

2, Pall Mall East, London, October 31, 1890.

IN view of the early meeting of the Technical Commission for fixing the scale of import duties to be applied within the conventional basin of the Congo, as provided under the Declaration which accompanies the General Act of the recent Brussels Conference, I am desired by the Directors of the Imperial British East Africa Company to suggest, for the consideration of the Marquis of Salisbury, the desirability of obtaining on this occasion the necessary sanction of the Powers for levying import duties in those parts of East Africa directly under the control of Great Britain.

It appears to the Directors that, as regards the Witu coast and the coast north as far as Kismayu, which are not subject to the reservation under which ports belonging to the Sultan of Zanzibar are placed, that a common Tariff of 5 per cent. on all imports (spirits, arms, and ammunition excepted, would cause the least inconvenience.

This rate would agree with the scale of duties now levied in the island of Zanzibar, on the German coast at Mombasa, and at the isolated ports of Lamu, Kismayu, Brava, Meurka, Mogdishu, and Warsheik, which are to be administered under Concession from the Sultan of Zanzibar, but subject to the Commercial Treaties, by the British and Italian East Africa Companies.

The question of the amount of duty to be levied is, however, of secondary importance.

What the Directors particularly desire to prevent is the unfair competition of the ports on the Witu coast, and on that lying between Witu and Kismayu, with the trade of Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu, which must result if the former are exempt from all import duty.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. DE VINCENT, *Secretary*.

No. 154.

Colonel Euan-Smith to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 3.)

(No. 410.)

My Lord,

Zanzibar, October 10, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, copy of certain telegraphic correspondence that has passed between the Prince de Chimay and His Highness the Sultan, regarding the appointment of Delegates on the part of His Highness to represent him at a fresh séance of the Brussels Conference.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. B. EUAN-SMITH.

Inclosure 1 in No. 154.

*The Prince de Chimay to the Sultan of Zanzibar.**Bruzelles, le 4 Octobre, 1890.*

COMMISSION prévue par Déclaration 2 Juillet se réunira 21 Octobre ou plus probablement 5 Novembre. Prière à Sa Hautesse de désigner ses Délégués, soit anciens Plénipotentiaires, soit une autre personne.

Ministre Affaires Étrangères,
(Signé) PRINCE DE CHIMAY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 154.

*The Sultan of Zanzibar to the Prince de Chimay.**October 8, 1890.*

I THANK you for your telegram, My former Plenipotentiaries to represent me again, and please inform them that I request this service at their hands.

(Signed) SULTAN SEYYID ALI.

No. 155.

Sir E. Malet to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 3.)

(No. 133. Africa. Secret.)

My Lord,

Berlin, October 31, 1890.

THE King of the Belgians, who is on a visit to the German Emperor, did me the honour to call upon me yesterday. In the course of conversation His Majesty dwelt upon the very friendly attitude of the German Government towards Belgium, of which he showed a strong appreciation.

His Majesty spoke of the difficulties with Holland, and told me that it would be impossible for him to ratify the Slave Trade Convention unless Holland gave way, because, in the Convention, he undertook obligations in regard to the Slave Trade, which it would be impossible for him to execute unless the State had such a revenue as could alone be derived from the proposed customs dues.

His Majesty went on to say that the German Government would at the necessary moment bring further pressure to bear upon the Dutch Government of a nature which he thought was calculated to force their hand, and His Majesty said that he felt sure of your Lordship's kind and powerful assistance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWARD B. MALET.

No. 156.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 3.)

(No. 263. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 1, 1890.

I INCLOSE a list of the Powers who have accepted the invitation of the Belgium Government to take part in the Technical Commission appointed to meet here on the 5th instant to discuss and settle the Tariff system to be established in the conventional basin of the Congo, together with the names of the Delegates whom they have appointed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 156.

List of Delegates on the Technical Commission.

- Austria-Hungary :—Count Khevenhüller-Metsch (Austro-Hungarian Minister at Brussels).
- Belgium :—Baron Lambermont and M. Émile Banning (Belgian Plenipotentiaries to the Brussels Conference).
- Congo State :—M. Janssen (Governor-General) and M. van Neuss (Administrator-General of the Congo State).
- Denmark :—Not yet named.
- France :—M. Bourée (French Minister at Brussels) and a Technical Delegate from the Ministry of the Colonies).
- Germany :—Count von Alvensleben and M. Göhring (as Technical Delegate), (German Plenipotentiaries to the Brussels Conference).
- Great Britain :—Sir John Kirk and Mr. Gosselin.
- Italy :—A Technical Delegate ; name not yet announced.
- Netherlands :—Baron Gericke (Dutch Minister at Brussels).
- Portugal :—Count de Macedo (Portuguese Minister) and M. de Castilho (Delegate to the Brussels Conference).
- Russia :—Prince Ouroussoff (Russian Minister at Brussels).
- Spain :—M. d'Aguëra (Spanish Minister at Brussels).
- Sweden and Norway :—M. de Burenstam (Swedish Minister at Brussels).
- Turkey :—Not yet announced ; probably Carathéodory Effendi (Turkish Minister at Brussels).
- United States :—Not yet announced ; probably Mr. Terrell (United States' Minister at Brussels).
- Zanzibar :—Sir John Kirk and M. Göhring.

Note.—The Delegates from Holland and the United States will attend unofficially, with the right of discussing but not of voting.

No. 157.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 3.)

(No. 264. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 1, 1890.

THE King of the Belgians returned this morning from his visit to the German Emperor at Potsdam, where his reception was more than cordial.

His Majesty seems to have been assured of the full approval and support by the Emperor and his Government of his demands in respect to the Congo import duties, and of their disapproval of the attitude of Holland.

The Cabinet of Berlin consider the alternative proposals put forward by Holland unacceptable. An annual subsidy, to be raised by subscription among the Powers, is, in their opinion, unlikely to be generally agreed to ; and the German Government would certainly not be inclined to add to the difficulty they already find in obtaining grants from Parliament for their own colonial expenditure by asking it to vote a subsidy for a foreign State. Moreover, they think it would be inconsistent with the dignity and independence of the Congo State to accept a veiled charitable donation, which might serve as a pretext for meddling in its internal affairs ; while, as regards the proposal to increase the initial duty on spirits, they will not hear of the question being reopened after its final settlement by the Conference.

They consider, however, that it would be impolitic to pronounce any such opinion immediately ; it will be time enough to do so when the Technical Commission has concluded its labours and settled a moderate Tariff of duties, which, if their alternative proposals were declared unacceptable, the Netherlands Government could not then reasonably reject.

This encouragement from the German Government will probably stiffen the King's resistance to any further concession on the part of the Congo State.

On the other hand, the Belgian Minister at the Hague privately reports that the Netherlands Government desire it to be clearly understood that they only consent to be represented, unofficially, on the Technical Commission at Brussels out of courtesy and deference to the wishes of the Powers, and that their Representative, Baron Gericke, will not be authorized to take any part in its deliberations beyond reporting the proceedings to his Government. It is understood, therefore, that they will not send a specialist.

I also learn from reliable sources that the French and Russian Governments, while deploring, or affecting to deplore, the attitude of Holland and the serious danger of its jeopardizing the whole work of the Brussels Conference, are not inclined to put any pressure on her beyond offering friendly advice.

Some anxiety is felt here as to the effect on public opinion of the meeting which is to be held in London, on the 4th instant, to consider the question of the Congo duties, at which it is expected that the whole policy of the Congo Government will be misrepresented and its administration attacked.

This meeting is attributed to the machinations of M. Schalkwyk, President of the New African Company of Rotterdam, who has been busily engaged, with the support, as is alleged, of the Netherlands Legation in London, in agitating in England against the proposed import duties. The Congo Government are endeavouring to have their case put fairly before the public at the meeting and through the press.

On the whole, the prospects of a settlement of this difficulty, on which the fate of the work of the Brussels Conference depends, appear at this moment far from hopeful.

The Belgian Government will communicate the alternative proposals of the Dutch Government to the Powers in a day or two without expressing any opinion on them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 158.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Baron Solvyns.

M. le Ministre,

Foreign Office, November 3, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 25th ultimo, inclosing a copy of the note inviting the Netherlands Government to be semi-officially represented at the Technical Commission, which will assemble at Brussels on the 5th November.

I have, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 159.

The Marquis of Salisbury to M. de Gevers.

M. le Chargé d'Affaires,

Foreign Office, November 3, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 29th ultimo, inclosing a copy of the last proposal of the Netherlands Government with regard to Congo duties, together with an explanatory statement.

I have, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 160.

The Marquis of Salisbury to M. de Gevers.

M. le Marquis,

Foreign Office, November 3, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 27th ultimo, transmitting, on behalf of the Netherlands Government, two alternative proposals for indemnifying the Congo State for expenses to be incurred in carrying out the provisions of the Brussels General Act.

I have, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 161.

The Marquis of Salisbury to M. de Gevers.

M. le Chargé d'Affaires,

Foreign Office, November 3, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 28th ultimo, inclosing a Memorandum on the subject of the proposals made by the Netherlands Government for providing a revenue to the Congo State, for the purpose of executing the duties imposed by the Brussels General Act.

I have, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 162.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 4.)

(No. 50. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 1, 1890.

The Report of the Sections (Bureaux) of the Second Chamber of the States-General on the Budget for Foreign Affairs, is favourable to the cause followed by the Government in the affair of the Congo duties; even the adversaries of M. Hartsen approving his attitude on this question.

In one of the Sections alone a minority of members, while admitting the correctness of the position taken up, expressed regret that the Netherlands should thereby have forfeited a certain amount of sympathy and good-will abroad, and above all, should have disturbed the good relations with Belgium, which the King himself had been at such pains to improve. A comparison was, moreover, drawn between the disinterested conduct of the Netherlands in formerly giving up its exclusive right to trading in Japan, and thus contributing to throw open the commerce of that Empire, and the actual return to the self-seeking policy of the old Company, as shown by sacrificing the highest interests of humanity to those of a portion only of Dutch trade. The dissentients further admitted that no less oppressive mode could be found of correcting the mistake originally made at the Berlin Conference, than by introducing the very moderate duties now proposed, and they were of opinion that the Government of the Congo is fully entitled to levy such duties, this country having no more right to oppose them than it would have in the case of Germany, France, America, or any other country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 163.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 4.)

(No. 51. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 2, 1890.

THE theory of my German colleague with regard to the very peculiar instructions, if such they can fairly be called, furnished to the Russian Minister here

No. 161 A.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 3, 8 P.M.)

(No. 60. Slave Trade Conference.)
(Telegraphic.)

Brussels, November 3, 1890, 5.53 P.M.

CONGO Duties Commission.

Porte made difficulties about appointing a Delegate and asks if France is represented. They have been told that all the Powers send Delegates. Baron Lambermont suggests that a word from Sir W. White might help.

No. 161 B.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 262. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 4, 1890.

I TRANSMIT herewith, for the information of your Lordship and Sir John Kirk, copies of two notes from the Netherlands Chargé d'Affaires respecting the alternative proposals of that Government for indemnifying the Congo State for expenses which would be incurred by carrying out the duties imposed by the provisions of the Brussels Congo Act.*

The proposal to obtain an annual contribution for the purpose from the other Parties to the Act is not one which Her Majesty's Government can entertain; but they would offer no objection if the other Powers could be persuaded to assent to an increase in the spirit duties, that being a policy which Her Majesty's Government have always advocated in the interests of the native races of Africa.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 161 C.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir W. White.

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, November 4, 1890, 6.10 P.M.

FOLLOWING received from Lord Vivian:—

[Repeat No. 60.]

Use your influence to induce Porte to join in Commission at which the Powers, including Holland, will be represented.

on the subject of the Congo duties, is that the Imperial Government were greatly urged by their Representative at Brussels, Prince Ouroussoff, who had taken a very strong line on the subject to join the other Governments in bringing some pressure to bear on the Netherlands Government, while at Paris still greater efforts were made through the medium of M. de Mohrenheim, to gain over Russia to the French point of view, which, whatever may have been the attitude of M. Bourée at the Conference, is decidedly favourable to Holland.

The Cabinet of St. Petersburg, desiring to oblige France on the one hand, and, on the other, unable entirely to withdraw from the position they had taken up at Brussels, got out of the difficulty by sending at the eleventh hour the singularly meaningless message with which Count Kapnist was intrusted.

I may observe that it is not impossible that the Count himself, who went to Paris about a fortnight ago, may have worked to this end in concert with M. de Mohrenheim, the instructions he received being so much in agreement with the views he had openly expressed, that they might also be believed to have been drafted by himself.

It does not seem unlikely that the Russian Government may have seen here an easy opportunity not only of accomodating France in a question of little interest to themselves, but also of marking on the same occasion the difference between their own anodine counsels and the vigorous language held here by Germany.

My German colleague tells me that he hears there is some question of the Belgian Government seeking to solve the whole difficulty by obtaining from the Chambers some considerable annual grant in aid of the Congo State, which would make that State really, what it now only is nominally, independent.

Any solution, he thinks, that would defeat the insidious policy of France, which aims at paralyzing the "État Indépendant" in the hope of its territories ultimately falling to her in virtue of her right of pre-emption, could not but be deemed satisfactory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 164.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 61.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 4, 1890, 6.15 P.M.

WE have informed Sir W. White by telegraph of the substance of your telegram No. 60 of yesterday's date, on the subject of the representation of Turkey in the Tariff Commission.

No. 165.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir W. White.

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 4, 1890, 6.10 P.M.

I YESTERDAY received a telegram from Brussels which I repeat to your Excellency. I have to request you to use your influence in order that the Porte may be induced to take part in the Commission, at which all the Powers will be represented, including Holland.

No. 166.

Baron Solvyns to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 5.)

M. le Marquis,

Légation de Belgique, Londres, le 4 Novembre, 1890.

LE Cabinet de La Haye a bien voulu faire part au Gouvernement du Roi de deux propositions présentées comme de nature à écarter les difficultés qui se sont élevées par rapport à la participation des Pays-Bas aux Actes de la Conférence de Bruxelles.

Il a en même temps pensé que le Gouvernement Belge serait peut-être disposé à prêter son intermédiaire en vue de s'assurer des intentions des autres Puissances à l'égard de ces ouvertures.

Le Gouvernement du Roi ne pouvait manquer de répondre à cette attente et c'est d'après ses instructions que je m'empresse, M. le Marquis, de soumettre à l'examen de votre Seigneurie les propositions dont il s'agit et qui sont développées dans la lettre ci-jointe de son Excellence M. le Ministre des Pays-Bas à Bruxelles et dans la note qui y est annexée.

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) SOLVYNS.

Inclosure 1 in No. 166.

Baron Gericke to Prince de Chimay.

Prince,

Bruxelles, le 27 Octobre, 1890.

JE viens d'être chargé par mon Gouvernement de soumettre à votre Excellence des propositions qu'il considère comme de nature à écarter les difficultés qui se sont élevées par rapport à la participation des Pays-Bas aux Actes de la Conférence de Bruxelles.

La première de ces propositions concerne la répartition entre tous les États Signataires des Actes de Berlin et de Bruxelles d'une contribution annuelle destinée à couvrir les frais devant résulter pour l'État Indépendant du Congo des charges qui lui sont imposées par l'Acte Général de la Conférence.

La seconde proposition, faite subsidiairement, aurait pour but d'élever immédiatement à 25 fr. le droit sur les alcools, fixé à 15 fr. par l'Article XCII de l'Acte Général pour la première période triennale.

Ces deux propositions se trouvent plus amplement développées dans la note que j'ai l'honneur de joindre à la présente.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Roi des Belges ayant dans toute l'affaire dont il s'agit prêté à l'État du Congo le concours de son intervention obligeante, tiendra peut-être à faire également les démarches nécessaires, afin de s'assurer des intentions des autres Puissances par rapport aux propositions susmentionnées.

Ces Puissances sont déjà en attendant informées directement de la démarche faite par la présente auprès de votre Excellence. Mon Gouvernement ose espérer que toutes y verront la preuve que le Gouvernement du Roi, tout en se conformant à son attitude à la Conférence, a voulu fournir un nouveau témoignage de ses sérieux efforts pour parvenir à une solution depuis longtemps désirée.

Veillez, &c.
(Signé) GERICKE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 166.

Memorandum.

L'Article IV de l'Acte Général de Berlin du 26 Février, 1885, porte :—

“Les marchandises importées dans ces territoires (tous les territoires constituant le Bassin du Congo et ses affluents) resteront affranchies de droits d'entrée et de transit.

“Les Puissances se réservent de décider au terme d'une période de vingt années si la franchise d'entrée sera ou non maintenue.”

C'est en se basant sur cet Article du Traité de Berlin que le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas s'est opposé à l'introduction de droits d'entrée dans le Bassin du Congo.

Le Gouvernement de l'État Indépendant toutefois déclare que la perception de droits d'entrée lui est indispensable pour rendre possible l'exécution des résolutions prises par la Conférence de Bruxelles.

C'est dans le but de rendre une autre solution possible et de faciliter à l'État du Congo l'accomplissement de ses obligations que le Gouvernement du Roi a l'honneur de faire les propositions mentionnées dans la lettre de ce jour.

La première semble se recommander entre autres par les motifs suivants :—

1. Qu'il est beaucoup plus équitable de faire supporter les frais résultant pour l'État Indépendant du Congo de l'exécution des décisions de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles, par toutes les Puissances s'intéressant à l'abolition de l'esclavage en Afrique,

que de les mettre à la charge du commerce sur le Congo auquel seulement quelques-unes d'entre elles prennent part.

2. Que l'engagement des Puissances susindiquées donnera au Gouvernement de l'État Indépendant du Congo une garantie que ne saurait jamais lui donner le prélèvement des droits d'entrée, dont le produit ne peut être que fort minime pour le moment et est variable et incertain pour l'avenir.

Dans la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles le produit des droits d'entrée à prélever dans l'État Indépendant du Congo, a été évalué à un chiffre de ± 200,000 fr., sans y comprendre les droits sur les alcools.

En égard toutefois d'une augmentation possible des importations dans l'État, il semble équitable de fixer ce chiffre à 400,000 fr. par an. Une somme égale, qui serait payée au moyen d'une contribution annuelle des États Signataires des Actes de Berlin et de Bruxelles, porterait la quote-part de chacun d'eux à 25,000 fr., chiffre qui ne serait pas exorbitant et pourrait par conséquent être soumis aux Parlements avec toute chance d'être adopté.

Quant à la seconde proposition, le Gouvernement du Roi qui, dans la Conférence de Bruxelles, s'est opposé au prélèvement immédiat d'un droit de 25 fr. par hectolitre des alcools, croit maintenant devoir la faire pour le cas où sa première proposition ne serait pas acceptée.

Il croit faire par là une concession qui prouve une fois de plus la sincérité de son désir d'arriver à une entente.

Bruxelles, le 27 Octobre, 1890.

No. 167.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 265. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 5, 1890.

I TRANSMIT herewith, for the information of your Lordship, and for communication to Sir J. Kirk, copy of a letter from the British East Africa Company,* suggesting the advisability of obtaining in the Technical Commission the necessary sanctions of the Powers for levying import duties in those ports of East Africa directly under the control of Great Britain.

They suggest, as regards the Witu coast and the coast north as far as Kismayu, a common Tariff of 5 per cent. on all imports (spirits, arms, and ammunition excepted), but consider the question of amount of secondary importance.

The Company particularly desire to prevent the unfair competition of the ports on the Witu coast and on that lying between Witu and Kismayu with the trade of Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu, which would, in their opinion, be the consequence of the exemption of the former from all import duties.

I have to request your Lordship to inform the British Delegates that if a proposal to extend the new Tariff to the whole Congo Basin is raised, they should receive it *ad referendum*.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 168.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 267. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 5, 1890.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 243 of the 4th ultimo, I transmit herewith, for your Lordship's information, copy of a letter from the Board of Trade,† to whom it was communicated, reporting the views of the Board relative to the Congo duties Tariff.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 169.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 268. Africa. Secret.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 5, 1890.

I TRANSMIT herewith, for your Lordship's confidential information, copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin,* reporting a conversation which he had held with His Majesty the King of the Belgians, during his recent visit to Berlin, in regard to the attitude of Germany in respect to the question of the Congo duties and the Dutch opposition to them.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 170.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 269. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 5, 1890.

WITH regard to the points relating to the procedure of the Technical Commission raised in your Lordship's despatch No. 202 of the 31st ultimo, I have to state that I am of opinion that the decisions of the Commission should be unanimous; but on the other points I prefer to reserve my opinion until it is seen what course the discussions will take.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 171.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(No. 24. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 5, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 23, Africa, of the 5th instant, I transmit herewith, for your information, copies of two notes from the Netherlands Chargé d'Affaires respecting the alternative proposals of that Government for indemnifying the Congo State for expenses which would be incurred by carrying out the provisions of the Brussels General Act.†

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 172.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 6.)

(No. 265. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 5, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith two despatches addressed, under flying seal, to your Lordship by Sir John Kirk and Mr. Gosselin,‡ recording the proceedings at the first meeting of the Technical Commission appointed to examine the Tariff of import duties to be established in the conventional basin of the Congo, and reporting a suggestion which has been privately thrown out by the French Minister, whereby the three Western Congo States should be authorized to draw up a common Tariff for subsequent consideration by the whole Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

* No. 155.

† Nos. 139 and 143.

‡ See Nos. 176 and 177.

No. 173.

Aborigines Protection Society to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 6.)

My Lord,

Broadway Chambers, Westminster, November 5, 1890.

I HAVE the honour, by direction of the Committee of the Aborigines Protection Society, to transmit herewith copies of Memorials which were forwarded on the 4th instant to His Majesty the King of the Belgians and His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, and to express our Committee's hope that your Lordship will approve the tenour of the same.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. R. FOX BOURNE.

Inclosure in No. 173.

Memorials.

To His Majesty the King of the Belgians and Sovereign of the Congo Independent State.

Sire,

ON behalf of the Aborigines Protection Society, of which your Majesty is an Honorary Member, and by direction of its Committee, we venture to address your Majesty with reference to the difficulties that have arisen as to adoption of the proposals issued by the International Conference at Brussels on the 2nd July, 1890.

Your Majesty is aware that this Society has laboured during more than half-a-century to protect and advance the interests of the oppressed races of Africa, and has at all times gratefully recognized the high value of your Majesty's generous and self-sacrificing efforts in the same direction. Our Committee is especially indebted to your Majesty for having convened the Conference at Brussels; and we may be permitted to remind your Majesty of our Committee's zealous endeavours to advance the work of that Conference by helping to inform and influence public opinion through meetings held at the Mansion House, under the auspices of the Lord Mayor of London and elsewhere, as well as by other means. We therefore with greater confidence appeal most earnestly and respectfully to your Majesty to take such action as may conduce to an equitable and honourable removal of the obstacles now offered to the confirmation and enforcement of the essential provisions of the Conference, as embodied in its General Act, for repression of the iniquitous and disastrous Trade in Slaves, and for control of the traffic in alcoholic liquors and weapons of war among the natives of Africa. Our Committee regards with profound sorrow and alarm the imminent danger of those provisions being annulled in consequence of differences concerning the Declaration appended to the General Act, in modification of the arrangements of the Berlin Conference of 1885 as regards the levying of duties on goods imported into the conventional basin of the Congo.

Our Committee has no right or desire to express an opinion as to the measures that may be deemed expedient for the well-being of the Congo Independent State, and it welcomes the suggestion that the revenues of that State shall be augmented with the special object of providing funds for repression of the Slave Trade within its boundaries by pacific and effective means; but it respectfully asks that your Majesty will give impartial consideration to any reasonable objections which may be raised to the terms of the contemplated Declaration, and also to any reasonable proposals which may be made for assuring to the Congo Independent State the necessary increase of revenue by other methods than are therein prescribed.

We take the liberty of inviting your Majesty's attention to Article III of the proposed General Act, which, while it provides that all the Powers exercising sovereignty in Africa shall take steps for repression of the Slave Trade, "each State in its respective possessions, and under its own direction ('chacune dans ses possessions respectives et sous sa direction propre')," also provides that severally, "whenever they consider it possible, they shall lend their good offices to the Powers which, with a purely humanitarian object, may be engaged in Africa on a similar mission ('toutes les fois qu'elles le jugeront possible, elles prêteront leurs bons offices aux Puissances

qui, dans un but purement humanitaire, accompliraient en Afrique une mission analogue).” As an inordinate share of the burden of repressing the Slave Trade devolves on the Congo Independent State, we venture to suggest that there would be no more than equity, and nothing derogatory to it, in that State availing itself of the “good offices” of other States towards defraying the exceptional outlay imposed upon it by the joint stipulations of the Signatory Powers.

It is further suggested to your Majesty that, as Article XCII of the proposed General Act authorizes a modification of the Berlin Treaty of 1885 in one important respect, viz., as regards the levying of imposts on spirituous liquors, there would be greater facility, as well as larger general advantage, in widening the scope of that Article, than in otherwise interfering with the Berlin Treaty. The imposition of a much higher duty than that of 15 fr. per hectolitre on alcoholic liquors imported into the appointed zone, which is at present prescribed by the General Act, would, we are assured, be of incalculable benefit to the natives, and would, at the same time, largely increase the revenues of the Congo Independent State under conditions which all the Powers represented at the Brussels Conference might be expected to sanction.

In conclusion, we venture to submit to your Majesty that, in the event of the objections to the proposed Declaration proving insuperable within the present limit of time, it is of the utmost importance to the welfare of the African races that the paramount object of the Conference should be secured by the adoption of the General Act, even without any appendage. Should it be found necessary to leave for further consideration and settlement questions as to fiscal changes in the relations between the Congo Independent State and the other Powers, we may remind your Majesty that the condition of affairs in this particular would be in no way different from that which would prevail were the entire project of the Conference abandoned; whereas, should the General Act, unanimously approved by the Powers represented at the Conference, be rejected for any cause, there would be indefinite and most deplorable postponement of the stupendous service to the cause of humanity so auspiciously and so generously resolved upon by the Representatives of all the Powers assembled by your Majesty's invitation at Brussels.

It is in the earnest hope that your Majesty will on no account suffer this threatened calamity to occur that we subscribe ourselves, on behalf of the Aborigines Protection Society, Sire, your Majesty's most obedient humble servants,

(Signed)

R. N. FOWLER, *Treasurer.*

H. R. FOX BOURNE, *Secretary.*

*Broadway Chambers, Westminster, London,
November 4, 1890.*

To His Majesty the King of the Netherlands.

Sire,

On behalf of the Aborigines Protection Society, and by direction of its Committee, we venture to address your Majesty with reference to the difficulties that have arisen as to adoption of the projects embodied in the General Act of the International Conference at Brussels for repression of the iniquitous and disastrous Traffic in Slaves, and its attendant evils, in the African Continent.

Our Committee regards with profound sorrow and alarm the probability of that Act being rendered abortive by reason of your Majesty's refusal to accede to the Declaration appended thereto, which proposes to modify the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 1885 so far as regards the levying of duties on goods imported into the conventional basin of the Congo.

Our Committee does not venture to question the grounds on which your Majesty's refusal is based. But it most respectfully appeals to your Majesty to take such steps as may conduce to an equitable adjustment of the present differences. Believing as it does that all obstacles may be removed by amicable discussion and mutual concessions on points in no way affecting the purposes of the contemplated General Act, our Committee earnestly hopes that your Majesty will, in the short interval of time yet remaining for its confirmation, enter into negotiations with a view to a satisfactory arrangement with the other Powers represented at the Brussels Conference, and thereby relieve your Majesty's Government from all responsibility for its failure, should such a catastrophe occur.

Our Committee asks leave to assure your Majesty that not only the members of the Aborigines Protection Society, but a large portion of the people in Great Britain, would greatly deplore the abandonment or indefinite postponement of the philanthropic Resolutions which were unanimously adopted at the Brussels Conference after so much zealous and generous effort on the part of the Powers represented in it, and which are so eminently calculated to advance the welfare of the African races as well as the commercial interests and the honourable reputation of the civilized nations in contact with him.

We have the honour to be, Sire, your Majesty's most obedient humble servants,
(Signed) R. N. FOWLER, *Treasurer*.
H. R. FOX BOURNE, *Secretary*.

Broadway Chambers, Westminster, London,
November 4, 1890.

No. 174.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 6.)

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, November 6, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 265, Africa, of yesterday, requesting Lord Vivian to inform us that, should a proposal to extend the new Tariff to the whole Congo Basin be raised, we should receive it *ad referendum*, we have the honour to state that the Commission certainly understand that the whole extent of the conventional basin comes within the scope of its deliberation.

Should your Lordship consider that the Tariff to be elaborated should be applied to a less extended area, it is urgently desirable that we should be placed in a position to define clearly and immediately its limits.

We should add that the German Delegates are decidedly of opinion that the Commission is empowered to deal with both East and West Africa.

No. 175.

Baron Marschall to Baron von Saurma.—(Communicated to the Marquis of Salisbury by
Count Hatzfeldt, November 7.)

(Translation.)

Berlin, November 1, 1890.

THE Netherlands Minister at this Court communicated to me yesterday a note from the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, dated the 24th instant, copy of which I inclose together with its inclosure. I perceive thereby to my deep regret, that the Cabinet of the Netherlands have not given their approval to the arguments which I urged in my despatch addressed to you on the 16th instant, but are determined, in great contrast with the unanimous view expressed by all the other States represented at the Brussels Conference, to maintain an opposition which though formally confined to the Declaration added to the Act of Brussels, must by the nature of circumstances have the effect of wrecking the great work of humanity and civilization which that Act contains.

Before entering into the different statements in the note, I cannot avoid expressing some surprise that M. Hartsen claims for the proceedings of the Netherlands Government the praise of having strictly adhered to Treaties and to justice, as if the Imperial Government did not observe those principles in the same degree. If the Imperial Government did not observe the Treaties they have concluded with the greatest conscientiousness imaginable, they might simply content themselves with the practical impossibility of keeping up Article IV of the Congo Act in the face of the provisions of the Anti-Slavery Act, which has been fully realized by all other Powers; and they would not find it necessary to exert themselves in order to overcome the opposition of the Netherlands Government. And as for justice, they need not fear criticism whose efforts are directed towards opening out to the States within the Basin of the Congo indispensable sources of revenue, so that a work may be advanced which is of advantage not only to the higher aims of civilization, but to the more material general interests, and not least to Dutch trade also.

The further statements with which the Netherlands Government seek to justify their position are contradictory in this sense, that they express a fear on the one hand lest the

introduction of duties should have a disturbing effect on Dutch commerce; and on the other, they admit that according to the Belgian proposals the duties to be levied in the Congo State by the Tariff would not amount to more than 200,000 fr. gross in the year, even admitting that, contrary to all experience in commerce with uncivilized countries, a part of the duties would fall on the importers and not on the consumers, the quota borne by Dutch commerce in the Congo basin would amount to so small a sum, when the whole is divided among all the States concerned, that fear seems groundless on this point, especially as the sums produced by the duties are to serve to push civilization further into the interior of Africa, to decrease the power of consumption in the country by destroying the ravaging Slave Trade, and to disclose new and productive markets.

The Netherlands Government expressly admit that the decisions of the Anti-Slavery Conference will impose heavier financial burdens on the Congo State, and that it is necessary to think of some plan to meet them; but this admission would only be of value if the counter-proposals showed a tendency on their part to abandon the negative position hitherto taken up by them. This is not the case. The first proposal to supply the necessary funds by a kind of collective subvention from all the Treaty Powers, cannot be accepted by us because it stands in direct contravention to the engagements we have taken, together with other States, by recognizing the Congo State as an *independent* one. The independence guaranteed to the Congo State would at once be shaken, as the principal attribute of an independent community, namely, to meet its obligations from its own resources, would be withdrawn from it, and its existence would be dependent on the changing opinions of a large number of Parliaments. Such a course would make it impossible for the Congo State to ascertain from one year to another what its means were, and would reopen the question of carrying out the Anti-Slavery Act from the beginning, over a large territory in Central Africa. As regards the alternative proposal, to raise at once the duty on alcohol to 25 fr. per hectolitre, the difficulties which had to be overcome in order to arrive at an agreement about the amount of this duty, in the face of all the conflicting interests, are so well known to the Netherlands Government, that they cannot be deceived as to the hopelessness of anything of the kind being accepted. It is sufficient to point to the discussions in the Conference on this point, to show that the reopening of this question would probably have the purely negative effect of destroying the Agreement of the Treaty Powers which has been arrived at with so much labour.

If the Congo State finds it at present impossible on its territory to discharge the functions which have devolved upon it through the Anti-Slavery Act, it is the duty of all States who have seriously at heart the great humanitarian and civilizing aims of that Act to open out new sources of revenue to the best of their ability. The opinion held by all States, excepting the Netherlands, that the modification of Article IV of the Congo Act forms the only practicable way in this direction, has not been refuted in any way since, but has been on the contrary strengthened by the impracticable nature of the Dutch counter-proposals. The partial suppression of the barriers which were erected by Article IV is in complete agreement with the intentions which guided the Treaty Powers in adopting that measure. The limitation in point of time of the operation of Article IV rests upon the idea that the advance and development of the Congo lands, and the burdens thereby imposed will in time make it impossible to maintain the freedom from duties; and if owing to the unforeseen rapidity of development in Central Africa, that impossibility appears evident after five years, and great interests of civilization and humanity are thereby endangered, the Powers who are greatly in favour of changing Article IV can justly point to the fact that their endeavours are fully in accordance with the thought which guided the Treaty Powers in the Congo Act.

I have to request you, Sir, to speak again to the Netherlands Government about this question, in the sense of this despatch, and to express the remark if they intend to continue their opposition, we shall be forced, to our great regret, to form the opinion that the particular interests of a small economic group are considered of greater importance than the international and humanitarian considerations which hitherto have guided us and the other Signatories of the Congo Act.

I beg you to read this despatch to M. Hartsen, and leave him a copy should he desire it.

(Signed) MARSCHALL.

Inclosure 1 in No. 175.

M. Hartsen to M. van der Hoeven.

M. le Ministre,

La Haye, le 24 Octobre, 1890.

J'AI eu l'honneur de recevoir votre dépêche du 20 de ce mois, me rendant compte d'un entretien que vous avez eu avec son Excellence le Secrétaire d'État des Affaires Étrangères, au sujet de la question de la Conférence Antiesclavagiste tenue à Bruxelles et de l'État Indépendant du Congo.

C'est à peu près simultanément que l'Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plénipotentiaire de Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Allemagne à La Haye a bien voulu me remettre une note, par laquelle le Gouvernement Néerlandais est invité à se désister de son opposition à l'établissement de droits d'entrée dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo et par conséquent à signer l'Acte Général et la Déclaration séparée, projetés par la Conférence de Bruxelles.

Je me permets de répondre par la présente à ces deux communications

Le respect qu'inspire la haute loyauté du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté l'Empereur ne permet pas d'admettre la supposition qu'un appel à l'équité et à la foi des Traités puisse porter la moindre atteinte aux sentiments de bienveillance et d'amitié dont le Gouvernement Impérial a toujours fait preuve envers les Pays-Bas.

Ce sont ces deux principes, c'est-à-dire l'équité et la foi des Traités, qui ont dicté au Gouvernement du Roi la ligne de conduite qu'il a suivie dans la question des droits d'entrée qui a occupé la Conférence de Bruxelles. C'est avec le plus grand empressement qu'il a accepté l'invitation de s'y faire représenter dans le but de concourir à mettre fin à l'odieux Trafic d'Esclaves.

Il suffit de parcourir les Protocoles de la Conférence pour s'assurer de la sincérité de ses intentions et de son désappointement, lorsque, malgré les protestations formelles de son Délégué il a été empêché de signer l'Acte Général (voir p. 591 des Protocoles).

Admettant la nécessité pour les États ayant des possessions ou exerçant des Protectorats dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo, de se procurer les moyens de faire face aux dépenses nécessaires à l'exécution des dispositions de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles, le Délégué des Pays-Bas a proposé à la Conférence de mettre à l'ordre du jour les moyens de pourvoir à ces dépenses (pp. 457 et 458 des Protocoles).

Cette proposition a été rejetée et la Conférence a décidé sans aucun examen sérieux des divers moyens par lesquels le but pourrait être atteint, qu'il fallait accorder aux États intéressés la faculté de prélever des droits d'entrée.

Cette décision a été formulée dans une Déclaration séparée et la connexité qu'on a établie entre ce document et l'Acte Général a empêché le Gouvernement du Roi d'y donner sa signature.

Il lui restait l'espoir que dans l'intervalle des six mois pendant lesquels il a été décidé que l'Acte Général resterait ouvert à la signature, la publication des Protocoles et des arguments que le Délégué des Pays-Bas a fait valoir, auraient servi à justifier aux yeux de l'Europe la position, qu'il a prise.

Il n'en a pas été ainsi. Non seulement une Commission va se réunir à Bruxelles avant l'expiration du délai de six mois pour régler les droits d'entrée, mais dès aujourd'hui on insiste auprès du Gouvernement du Roi pour le faire revenir sur sa décision.

Il est inutile de répéter tous les arguments qu'a fait valoir le Délégué des Pays-Bas et qui sont insérés dans les Protocoles de la Conférence, il suffit de rappeler qu'il y a à peine cinq ans que les Puissances réunies à Berlin ont décrété solennellement l'Article IV de l'Acte Général :—

“Les marchandises importées dans ces territoires resteront affranchies de droits d'entrée et de transit. Les Puissances se réservent de décider au terme d'une période de vingt années si la franchise d'entrée sera ou non maintenue.”

L'Acte de Berlin, qui déjà interdisait l'esclavage, proclamait l'entière liberté de commerce comme l'élément civilisateur et le seul qui, par ses effets bienfaisants, pourrait combattre cet odieux Trafic.

La courte période de cinq années qui s'est écoulée depuis la réunion de Berlin ne prouve en aucune façon que ce court espace ait donné les résultats qu'on espérait en 1885 voir se réaliser en vingt ans.

Quelque modérés que soient ces droits les inévitables formalités et les entraves qui seront la conséquence de leur introduction exerceront un effet désastreux sur le commerce, même en supposant qu'une fois entrée dans cette voie, et le principe de la libre entrée abandonnée, on s'en tienne à ce qui est actuellement proposé. Or, malgré le contenu de la Déclaration, l'expérience de ce qui se passe aujourd'hui à l'égard de l'Article IV de l'Acte de Berlin doit faire naître la pensée que toute garantie fait défaut, quant à la possibilité que le montant des droits actuellement proposé soit élevé dans un avenir prochain.

Je partage le sincère désir de M. le Baron Marschall que l'État Indépendant du Congo puisse se soutenir, mais je ne saurais partager son avis que les droits d'entrée lui sont indispensables à cet effet ; au contraire, d'après les données officielles publiées dans les Protocoles de la Conférence de Bruxelles le produit brut sur la base de 10 pour cent a été estimé ne pouvoir excéder 200,000 fr., ce qui, déduction faite des frais de perception et de surveillance, ne laisserait guère de résultat, surtout en adoptant la réduction que l'on a l'intention d'introduire au chiffre primitivement projeté de 10 pour cent. Ceci est si évident qu'on ne saurait y voir qu'une mesure préparatoire à des droits plus élevés qui ne pourraient manquer de détruire le commerce et à l'établissement d'un monopole, contraire dans ses conséquences à toute idée de civilisation nécessaire à l'abolition des abus et des actes inhumains qui affligent ces contrées.

Ce ne sont donc pas des droits d'entrée qui peuvent soutenir l'État du Congo, ni lui assurer le progrès. C'est le libre exercice du commerce, l'absence de formalités et d'entraves qui, seuls, peuvent faire atteindre ce but. C'est ainsi qu'on l'a compris à Berlin en 1885, et je ne doute pas que le Gouvernement Allemand ne le reconnaisse encore aujourd'hui.

Ce n'est pas un défi que le Gouvernement du Roi lance à la face de l'Europe en défendant la liberté d'action et de mouvement dans le Bassin du Congo ; c'est sa conviction que cette liberté seule est la force motrice de la civilisation et des progrès humanitaires que la Conférence de Bruxelles a eus en vue, qui lui dicte la ligne de conduite qu'il a cru devoir suivre.

Cette conviction se basant au surplus sur la foi des Traités, l'a amené à combattre une mesure qui ne saurait qu'arrêter le développement des régions auxquelles l'Europe voue à juste titre toute son attention et toute sa sympathie.

Quoiqu'il en soit, M. le Ministre, il n'en reste pas moins évident que l'exécution des Résolutions prises par la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles causera pour l'État Indépendant du Congo une augmentation de dépenses à laquelle il faut pourvoir.

Le Gouvernement du Roi estime que ce but peut être atteint sans charger le commerce des entraves inséparables de l'introduction de droits d'entrée.

Deux voies sont ouvertes pour remplacer ces droits, et je me permets de les indiquer ici sommairement. Le Gouvernement du Roi croit devoir proposer de porter dès maintenant au maximum de 25 fr. par hectolitre, fixé dans l'Acte Général de Bruxelles, les droits sur les spiritueux, ou bien de remplacer les droits d'entrée projetés par une contribution annuelle, qui serait, jusqu'à l'expiration de l'Acte de Berlin, répartie entre les Parties Signataires de cet Acte, et de celui de Bruxelles jusqu'à concurrence du produit approximatif de ces droits.

Le Gouvernement du Roi a fait part de cette double proposition au Gouvernement Belge en le priant de bien vouloir la communiquer aux Puissances intéressées et de demander leur opinion sur son contenu. En attendant, il ose se flatter de l'espoir que le Gouvernement Allemand voudra bien la prendre en sérieuse et bienveillante considération.

En vous autorisant à donner lecture de la présente dépêche à son Excellence le Secrétaire d'État pour les Affaires Étrangères, et à lui en laisser copie, je saisis, &c.

(Signé)

HARTSEN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 175.

Dutch Propositions.

REPLACER les droits d'entrée projetés par une contribution annuelle qui serait, jusqu'à l'expiration de l'Acte de Berlin du 26 Février, 1889, répartie entre les Parties Signataires de cet Acte et de celui de Bruxelles jusqu'à concurrence du produit approximatif de ces droits.

Subsidiairement : porter dès maintenant au maximum de 25 fr. par hectolitre les droits sur les spiritueux.

Exposé des Motifs.

L'Article IV de l'Acte Général de Berlin du 26 Février, 1885, porte :—

“ Les marchandises importées dans ces territoires (tous les territoires constituant le Bassin du Congo et ses affluents) resteront affranchies de droits d'entrée et de transit.

“ Les Puissances se réservent de décider au terme d'une période de vingt années si la franchise d'entrée sera ou non maintenue.”

C'est en se basant sur cet Article du Traité de Berlin que le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas s'est opposé à l'introduction de droits d'entrée dans le Bassin du Congo.

Le Gouvernement de l'État Indépendant toutefois déclare que la perception de droits d'entrée lui est indispensable pour rendre possible l'exécution des Résolutions prises par la Conférence de Bruxelles.

C'est dans le but de rendre une autre solution possible et de faciliter à l'État du Congo l'accomplissement de ses obligations que le Gouvernement du Roi a l'honneur de faire les propositions susmentionnées.

La première semble se recommander entre autres par les motifs suivants :—

1. Qu'il est beaucoup plus équitable de faire supporter les frais résultant pour l'État Indépendant du Congo de l'exécution des décisions de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles par toutes les Puissances s'intéressant à l'abolition de l'esclavage en Afrique, que de les mettre à la charge du commerce sur le Congo, auquel seulement quelques-unes d'entre elles prennent part.

2. Que l'engagement des Puissances susindiquées donnera au Gouvernement de l'État Indépendant du Congo une garantie que ne saurait jamais lui donner le prélèvement des droits d'entrée, dont le produit ne peut être que fort minime pour le moment et est variable et incertain pour l'avenir.

Dans la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles le produit des droits d'entrée à prélever dans l'État Indépendant du Congo a été évalué à un chiffre de *circa* 200,000 fr., sans y comprendre les droits sur les alcools.

En égard toutefois d'une augmentation possible des importations dans l'Etat, il semble équitable de fixer ce chiffre à 400,000 fr. par an. Une somme égale qui serait payée au moyen d'une contribution annuelle des États Signataires des Actes de Berlin et de Bruxelles porterait la quote-part de chacun d'eux à 25,000 fr., chiffre qui ne serait pas exorbitant et pourrait par conséquent être soumis aux Parlements avec toute chance d'être adopté.

Quant à la seconde proposition, le Gouvernement du Roi qui, dans la Conférence de Bruxelles, s'est opposé au prélèvement immédiat d'un droit de 25 fr. par hectolitre des alcools, croit maintenant devoir le faire pour le cas où sa première proposition ne serait pas acceptée.

Il croit faire par là une concession qui prouve une fois de plus la sincérité de son désir d'arriver à une entente.

No. 176.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 7.)

(No. 1.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 5, 1890.

WE have the honour to report that the first meeting of the Technical Commission, assembled to examine the question of import duties in the Congo conventional basin, took place to-day at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. All the Powers were represented by Delegates, excepting Turkey.

M. Beernaert, on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, received the Commission, which at once proceeded to elect Baron Lambermont as its President.

It was decided, on the proposal of the President, that the Ministers of all the Signatory Powers here present should have the right to attend and to take part in the discussion, and also that ex-Plenipotentiaries of the Conference, who are not Ministers, should have the like right granted them.

As this, the first meeting, was of a purely formal nature, no further business was transacted, and the meeting stands ajourned till to-morrow at 2 P.M.

We are given to understand that the French and Austro-Hungarian Delegates are as yet without instructions, some confusion having arisen through a mistake on the part of their respective Governments, that the questions to be discussed affected the Congo State alone.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 177.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 7.)

(No. 2.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 5, 1890.

AT the close of the meeting of the Commission held to-day, we were sounded by the French Minister as to whether it might not facilitate the discussions if the three Powers, viz., France, Portugal, and the Independent State, holding territory on the West Coast, were to prepare jointly, and submit to the Commission, for their consideration, a Tariff applicable to the Congo Basin proper, leaving the eastern side of the conventional basin to be dealt with separately.

We consulted our German colleagues on this matter, and, as such an arrangement might facilitate the work, they have undertaken to refer the question to Berlin.

In the course of conversation our German colleagues asked what position we intended to assume on the inland frontier of the Sultan's 10-mile coast limit, and whether we proposed to raise fresh import dues at that line under the new régime, in addition to those collected at the Sultan's ports on the coast.

M. Göhring said that it appeared to him that the right to levy such duties would result both to Germany and Great Britain, and that the question was sure to be put to us both by one or other of our colleagues. M. Göhring said that on this point he was not prepared to give an answer, but that as regarded the inland frontier between Germany and the Congo State, he had no doubt that duties under the new Tariff might be collected.

We further understand from Count Alvensleben that the German Government are of opinion that the duties, once defined and agreed upon, shall be obligatory within all the States and possessions affected, and that it shall not be optional on the part of one or other to lower the rate.

In the view of Count Alvensleben, such a right to lessen optionally the Tariff would inevitably result in a differential treatment.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 178.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 7.)

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, November 6, 1890.

WE have the honour to report that at the meeting of the Congo Tariff Commission to-day the proposed draft Tariff submitted by the Congo Government was informally discussed, all the Delegates speaking under full reserve.

The President laid down that the Commission was empowered, by the mandate conferred on it by the Conference, to deal with the whole extent of the conventional basin of the Congo, as described in Article I of the General Act of Berlin.

We would venture to ask your Lordship to send instructions as to this basis with as little delay as possible.

After the meeting was over, the French Minister informally suggested that the Commission should sanction the elaboration of two separate Tariff schemes, one for the eastern, and one for the western, group of States.

No. 179.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir J. Kirk.

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 7, 1890, 6:30 P.M.

IN reply to your telegram No. 2, no objection will be raised by us if the Commission accept the ruling of the President.

We cannot instruct by anticipation as regards details. You must take part under reserve in the discussions, and when points are ripe for decision refer for instructions.

No. 180.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir J. Kirk.

(No. 1.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 7, 1890.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 2 of the 5th instant, respecting the suggestion that the three West Coast Powers should draw up a common Tariff applicable to the Congo Basin proper, the eastern side of the basin being treated separately, and to your conversations with your German colleagues on the subject of the right to levy inland duties, I have to state, for the information of yourself and Mr. Gosselin, that, as regards the first point, no anticipatory instructions can be given, it being not clear that the suggestion will take the form of a definite proposal; and that, as regards the second, Her Majesty's Government cannot commit themselves to any policy which would involve an undertaking on their part for the effective levying of a customs duty on any land frontier under British protection or influence.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 181.

Foreign Office to Imperial British East Africa Company.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 7, 1890.

WITH reference to your letter of the 31st ultimo, suggesting the advisability of obtaining, in the Technical Commission about to meet at Brussels, the necessary sanction of the Powers for levying import duties in those parts of East Africa directly under the control of Great Britain, I am directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to state, for the information of your Directors, that, without committing themselves to a definite expression of opinion as to the expediency of the proposal, Her Majesty's Government will undertake that if the proceedings of the Commission afford an opportunity their suggestion shall receive full consideration.

I am, &c.

(Signed) P. CURRIE.

No. 182.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 8.)

(No. 3.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 7, 1890.

AT the opening of to-day's sitting of the Technical Commission, the Dutch Minister read a statement declaring that he was only present unofficially at the meeting, as a mark of courtesy towards the other Powers.

After the first reading of the draft Tariff, which was of a purely informal nature,

the Portuguese Minister stated that his present instructions did not allow him to accept the principle of a General Tariff to be applied to all the States within the conventional basin of the Congo; adding that, in his opinion, a common Tariff imposed on all alike, without any consideration for climate and geographical differences, would in reality be a great injustice to African trade.

His Excellency also objected to the stipulation whereby the new Tariff would remain in force for fifteen years, no provision being made for its modification during that time; but it was pointed out that this arrangement had been sanctioned by the Conference, and embodied in the Declaration of the 2nd July, and was, therefore, outside the competency of the Commission.

The French Minister stated that in a very large measure he shared the views of his Portuguese colleague. The French Government had, throughout all the negotiations relating to the imposition of import duties, wished to maintain the independence of each Power at home ("l'indépendance de chacun chez soi"). They wished to allow each State to arrange as far as possible its own Tariff, always within the 10 per cent. limit; he was not asking for an absolute, but for a relative, freedom of tariffication—a compromise, in fact, between a common Tariff and absolute commercial autonomy.

The President said that any discussion on the Tariff, such as he proposed, would at the present time be carried on under every reserve and without prejudicing any points whatever, but that a free interchange of ideas at the outset might prove of great use hereafter in removing difficulties.

In reply to an inquiry addressed to him, the President laid down that by the mandate of the Conference the Tariff to be elaborated by the Commission was intended to apply to the whole extent of the conventional basin of the Congo, as defined in Article I of the Berlin Act, adding that the draft Tariff submitted by the Congo State had been framed on those lines.

The Commission then proceeded to a preliminary examination of the figures of the draft Tariff, copy of which was inclosed in Lord Vivian's despatch No. 243, Slave Trade Conference, of the 4th October. At the request of the German Delegates the amount of the duty on salt was reserved. To meet the views of the French Delegates, the duty on wine in bottles was lowered from 10 to 7 per cent.; wine in casks, from 7 to 6 per cent.; while "conserves alimentaires," beers, and sugar, were raised from 5 to 6 per cent.

It was explained that the term "conserves alimentaires" included all provisions packed in tins, or hermetically sealed; but did not include rice, corn, or common navy biscuits.

The words "l'État Indépendant" at the end of the fourth exception were struck out, as limiting the operation to one State. As everything was now being discussed under the fullest reserve and nothing of principle decided, we did not think it necessary at this stage to make any special notice that we held instructions to take *ad referendum* the question of the common Tariff, so strongly insisted upon by the British Plenipotentiaries in Conference.

On reference being made to the conversion of *ad valorem* into specific duties, we reminded the Commission that the British Plenipotentiaries in Conference had always maintained their preference for the former.

We beg to inclose a list of the members of the Commission. The Turkish Minister has not yet received authority to take part in the discussion, but hopes to receive it in the course of the next few days.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure in No. 182.

COMMISSION CHARGÉE D'ÉLABORER LE TARIF DES DROITS D'ENTRÉE DANS LE BASSIN
CONVENTIONNEL DU CONGO.

LISTE de MM. les Délégués.

Pays.	Délégués.	Domicile.
Allemagne	Son Excellence M. le Comte d'Alvensleben, Ministre d'Allemagne. M. Göhring, Consul-Général d'Allemagne à Amsterdam.	58, Rue Beillard. Hôtel Britannique.
Autriche-Hongrie	Son Excellence M. le Comte Khevenhüller- Metsch, Ministre d'Autriche-Hongrie.	2, Rue Zinner.
Belgique	M. le Baron Lambermont, Ministre d'État .. M. E. Banning, Directeur-Général au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères.	7, Rue Zinner. 64, Rue du Président.
Danemark	M. Schack de Brockdorff, Consul-Général de Danemark à Anvers.	Hôtel de France.
Espagne	Son Excellence M. Gutierrez de Agüera, Ministre d'Espagne.	66, Rue de la Loi.
État Indépendant du Congo ..	M. Janssen, Administrateur-Général du Dé- partement de l'Intérieur de l'État Indépen- dant du Congo. M. van Neuss, Secrétaire-Général du Ministre des Finances de Belgique.	36, Rue Veydt. 44, Rue de la Croix.
États-Unis d'Amérique ..	Son Excellence Mr. Terrell, Ministre des États- Unis (Délégué à titre officieux).	43, Rue Beillard.
France	Son Excellence M. Bourée, Ministre de France. M. de Chavannes, Lieutenant-Gouverneur du Gabon et du Congo Français.	47, Rue Beillard. Hôtel Britannique.
Grand-Bretagne	Sir John Kirk, G.C.M.G. M. Gosselin, Premier Secrétaire de la Légation de Sa Majesté Britannique.	Hôtel de l'Europe. 23, Rue des Deux-Églises.
Italie	M. le Chevalier Bardi, Chargé d'Affaires d'Italie.	83, Rue Montoyer.
Pays-Bas	Son Excellence M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen, Ministre des Pays-Bas (Délégué à titre officieux).	32, Rue Montoyer.
Portugal	Son Excellence M. le Comte de Macedo, Ministre de Portugal. M. Augusto de Castilho, Capitaine de Frégate de la Marine Portugaise, et Ancien Gou- verneur-Général de Mozambique.	13, Rue d'Arlon. 36, Rue de Naples.
Russie	Son Excellence M. le Prince Ouroussoff, Ministre de Russie.	76, Rue d'Arlon.
Suède et Norvège	Son Excellence M. de Burenstam, Ministre de Suède et Norvège.	50, Rue Marie de Bourg- nogne.
Turquie		

SECRÉTARIAT.

Chef du Secrétariat.

M. Léon Arendt, Directeur-Général au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 70, Rue Beillard.

Secrétaires.

M. de Cuvelier, Secrétaire-Général du Département des Affaires Étrangères de l'État
Indépendant du Congo, 23, Rue de l'Activité.

M. Ch. Seeger, Chef de Division au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 30, Rue de Comines.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 8.)

(No. 266. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 7, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT tells me in confidence that answers have been given by most of the Great Powers to the alternative proposals put forward by Holland for indemnifying the Congo State for the additional expenditure it would have to incur in carrying out the provisions of the General Act of the Brussels Conference, and that they are, without exception, adverse to the proposal to raise the required funds by subscription among the Powers, but that one or two Governments have stated that they would not object to providing these funds by an increase of the spirit duties. The German Government, however, whose refusal to entertain the Dutch proposals is most decided and categorical, altogether declines to assent to the reopening of this question after its settlement with so much difficulty in Conference.

I am told that the refusal of the Powers to entertain the Dutch counter-proposals has produced a certain effect at the Hague, and that there are some signs of that Government relaxing its hitherto uncompromising resistance to the establishment of import duties in the Congo Basin. Belgium and the Congo State have, on their side, shown, by the moderation of the project of Tariff which they have submitted to the Technical Commission, and by the simplicity of the Regulations and formalities which will govern its application, a sincere desire, which is evidently appreciated by the Netherlands Representative on the Commission, to meet that Government half way.

I should, therefore, be hopeful of a favourable issue of the deliberations of the Commission, were it not that there are evident signs of hesitation and indecision on the part of some of the Powers represented there.

The German Delegates are in possession of full instructions, but neither the French nor the Portuguese Delegates are in the same position, and, judging from their attitude, it is not clear that their demand to be allowed to arrange a separate Tariff or Tariffs for the States in the Congo Basin proper, which would otherwise seem reasonable, may not cover an intention to introduce differential treatment favouring their own products, which would be a violation of the leading principle of the Act of Berlin.

A distinct question to this effect was put to them to-day, and they were asked, if the separate Tariff which they proposed, that the three Congo States should arrange between themselves, would be submitted to the whole Commission for sanction. They demanded time to consult their Governments on these and other points, and the Commission has accordingly adjourned until the 12th instant.

With reference to your Lordship's instruction to the British Delegates, that if a proposal to extend the new Tariff to the whole Congo Basin should be raised, they should receive it *ad referendum*, I venture to point out that by signing the Declaration of the 2nd July we have committed ourselves, in principle, to the establishment by the Technical Commission of a customs system to be applied in the conventional basin of the Congo, and that, in view of this fact, it would be difficult for the British Delegates now to make a reserve to the application of the Tariff to the whole Congo Basin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 8.)*

(No. 4.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 7, 1890.

AT to-day's meeting of the Technical Commission, the draft Rules to be adopted, in order to simplify the formalities attending the collection of the proposed import duties, were informally discussed.

The German Delegates raised an objection, which was supported by us, to the delivery for examination of the ship's manifest of goods not intended to be landed (see section C: "Elles seront exemptes de droits sans autre formalité qu'une déclaration sommaire d'après les indications des papiers de bord").

We thought that an unnecessary disclosure of trading operations might be injurious to the merchants, and could be of no use to the State, unless penalties were attached to the non-production of a full and accurate statement of the whole cargo.

The Congo State and French Delegates, on the other hand, defended the measure and the necessity of examining the ship's papers, in order to prevent fraud.

All the other proposals contained in the draft Rules were regarded as very liberal; but it was admitted that before they could be applied to any of the other States in the conventional basin they would have to be re-cast.

The President then announced that he was authorized by the King to communicate, not to the Commission, but to the Plenipotentiaries of the Powers, His Majesty's intention of modifying the recent Decrees, imposing fresh export duties and licence taxes now levied under the Congo State Decrees, provided always that a sufficient import duty were agreed to.

The President also said that he had been authorized, on behalf of the Congo State, to submit to the Commission the readiness of that Government to agree to a grouping of the three Western Congo States under one Tariff, leaving the Powers interested in the free-trade zone on the eastern side of the conventional basin to elaborate a scheme of their own.

Without in any way assenting to their proposition, we insisted that in any case the draft Tariff must be submitted to, and sanctioned by, the full Commission.

The President said that the Powers chiefly interested would, in fact, form a Sub-Commission, and would submit their Report to the full Commission for discussion and approval.

With reference to this proposal to split the Tariff and to allow the States in the Congo Basin proper to arrange a separate Tariff for the West Coast, Lord Vivian pointed out that the British Delegates, before referring the proposal to Her Majesty's Government, would probably require to know the exact basis of such an arrangement. He observed that although Her Majesty's Government had consented, for a specially defined purpose, so far to modify Article IV of the Berlin Act as to allow the levying of moderate import duties in the Congo Basin, to meet the special expenditure required for the purpose of suppressing the Slave Trade, they had never consented, and, he felt sure, never would consent, to any derogation from the principles established by the Berlin Act of perfect equality of treatment and freedom of transit. The British Plenipotentiaries had insisted on these principles in the Conference, and had opposed the system of separate Tariffs, on the ground that it might lead to preferential treatment by each country of its own products; and the British Delegates would therefore require to know whether, if the separate arrangement were agreed to, it was clearly understood that differential treatment in any shape or form was not contemplated, and whether the separate Tariff for the Congo Basin proper, when elaborated by the interested Powers, would be submitted for sanction to the whole Commission before it was finally adopted.

In his reply the President ruled that any differential treatment was absolutely excluded by the terms of the Berlin Act, and proposed that the suggestion to split the Tariff should be referred to the different Governments for their opinion.

M. Bourée, while admitting that the Berlin Act was explicit on this point, said that an indirect differential treatment might possibly result, should the Tariff be so manipulated as to classify in the lower categories the national products, those of the other non-territorial Powers being meanwhile entered at the higher rates.

On this point he reserved the opinion of his Government.

We may add that in the course of subsequent conversation, M. Bourée stated that he was sure that no objection would be raised by Portugal to the scheme of a joint Tariff applicable to the three Western Congo Powers.

The next meeting of the Commission is fixed for Tuesday next, in the hope that by that time all the Delegates will have received full and definite instructions from their respective Governments as to the proposal to draw up separate Tariffs for the eastern and western groups.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 185.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 9.)

(Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, November 9, 1890.

I HAD the honour of receiving your Lordship's telegram, Africa, dated the 4th November, repeating Lord Vivian's No. 60 of the 3rd instant in connection with the Brussels Conference.

Telegraphic instructions have been sent to the Ottoman Minister at Brussels to act as Delegate.

Any delay in carrying out your Lordship's instructions is to be attributed to the slow procedure at the Palace, for I sent Sir Alfred Sandison on Thursday, the 6th instant, to take the necessary steps.

No. 186.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 62. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 10, 1890, 6.30 p.m.

WITH reference to despatch No. 4, addressed to me by the Delegates, I have to inform you that the Board of Trade are being consulted as to separate Tariffs on the East and West Coasts of Africa, and we hope that to-morrow an answer may be sent.

No. 187.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 10, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to transmit herewith, for the immediate consideration of the Board of Trade, the accompanying despatches, as marked in the margin,* from Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels and from the British Delegates to the Technical Commission now sitting at Brussels, on the question of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo.

It will be seen from these despatches that it has been proposed, instead of adopting one Tariff for the entire basin, to split the Tariff system into two groups, one for the east and one for the west coast of the basin. This proposal would apply one scale of duties to the territories of the States in the Congo Basin proper, France, Portugal, and the Congo Free State, while England, Italy, and Germany would have a separate scale in their spheres of influence upon the east coast.

It would be understood that in both cases the Tariffs would be subject to the 10 per cent. maximum specified in the Declaration annexed to the Brussels Act.

The next meeting of the Commission is on Tuesday, the 11th instant, by which time it is hoped that all the Delegates will have received full and definite instructions from their respective Governments upon this proposal. Lord Salisbury would be glad to receive the views of the Board as early as possible to-morrow to enable him to instruct the British Delegates.

He would be prepared, with their concurrence, to adhere to the proposal.

I am, &c.

(Signed)

P. CURRIE.

No. 188.

Sir G. Petre to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 253. Africa.)

My Lord,

Lisbon, November 6, 1890.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me yesterday that the Portuguese Government declined to accede to the request which had been officially made to them by the Dutch Minister here, that they should support the Netherlands Government in

proposing that the Congo Free State, instead of being empowered by the Brussels Congress to levy certain defined import duties up to 10 per cent. *ad valorem* in the Congo Basin, should be subsidized by all the Signatory Powers for the special purpose for which the duties were to be sanctioned.

Senhor du Bocage told me that the Portuguese Government fully adhered to the consent already given by them in principle to duties being levied by the Congo Basin States, though there was matter for discussion in regard to the mode of giving effect to the consent. As to Portugal's subsidizing a foreign State, for any purpose whatever, it was out of the question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE G. PETRE.

No. 189.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 268. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 8, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 262, Africa, of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report that the Belgian Government are aware that the Netherlands Government have been in direct communication with the Powers on the subject of their alternative proposals, after having asked the Belgian Government to act as their intermediary, and that they are rather surprised at this unusual proceeding, which seems to be wanting in courtesy, though they do not intend to take any notice of it.

Your Lordship states that Her Majesty's Government would offer no objection to the proposal to provide the fresh resources required by the Congo State for the suppression of the Slave Trade by an increase of the spirit duties, if the other Powers could be brought to agree to it; but, if I am correctly informed, the German Government strongly object to allowing this question to be reopened, and after the very great difficulty we had in settling it in Conference, I fear it would be inexpedient, if not dangerous, to do so.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 190.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 269. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 8, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 259, Africa, of the 1st instant, stating that you had notified to Baron Solvyns the concurrence of Her Majesty's Government in the proposal that the United States' Government should be invited to use their good offices to secure the adhesion of the Republic of Liberia to the General Act of the Brussels Conference, Baron Lambermont informs me that the French Government have objected to this proposal on the ground that Liberia is an independent African State, in no way under the protection of the United States, and that the intervention of that Government is unnecessary in order to approach the Government of Liberia.

Baron Lambermont proposes to explain to M. Ribot, in reply, that the acceptance of the offer of the United States' Government to use their good offices with that of Liberia in this matter is a simple matter of convenience, which in no way implies any admission that that Republic is under the protection of the United States, or that their intervention is necessary in order to approach it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 191.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 271. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 9, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose, under flying seal, a despatch addressed to your Lordship by the British Delegates on the Congo Tariff Commission, transmitting copies of the *procès-verbal* of the first sitting, and of a Table comparing the proposed import Tariff with those now existing in Africa.*

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 192.

British Delegates to the Slave Trade Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 5.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 8, 1890.

WE have the honour to inclose three copies of the *procès-verbal* recording the proceedings at the opening sitting of the Congo Tariff Technical Commission on the 5th instant, and copy of a Statistical Table, compiled by the Congo Government, comparing the proposed import Tariff for the conventional basin of the Congo with those now existing in other African States.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 192.

Commission chargée d'Élaborer le Tarif des Droits d'Entrée dans le Bassin conventionnel du Congo.

Séance du 5 Novembre, 1890.

MM. LES Délégués se sont réunis aujourd'hui, 5 Novembre, à 2 heures, à l'hôtel du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères.

Étaient présents :

M. le Comte d'Alvensleben; M. Göhring; M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch; M. le Baron Lambermont; M. Émile Banning; M. F.-G. Schack de Brockdorff; M. Gutierrez de Agüera; M. Janssen; M. Van Neuss; Mr. E. H. Terrell; M. Bourée; M. de Chavannes; Sir John Kirk; M. Gosselin; M. le Chevalier Bardi; M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen; M. le Comte de Macedo; M. le Capitaine A. de Castilho; M. le Prince Ouroussoff; et M. de Burenstam.

Assistait également à la séance : Lord Vivian.

M. Beernaert, Ministre des Finances, en l'absence de M. le Prince de Chimay, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, retenu hors de Bruxelles par un deuil de famille, souhaite la bienvenue à MM. les Délégués. Il fait des vœux pour le succès de leurs travaux et met à leur disposition les salons Ministériels et le concours du personnel.

M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen, Doyen du Corps Diplomatique et Délégué Officiel des Pays-Bas, remercie l'honorable Ministre de l'hospitalité que le Gouvernement du Roi veut bien offrir à la Commission. Tous ses membres sont très sensibles au témoignage sympathique que lui a donné le Gouvernement Belge. La Commission eût été heureuse de voir l'honorable Ministre, non pas figurer passagèrement au milieu d'elle, mais y siéger et prendre part à ses travaux.

M. Beernaert se dit très touché de cette courtoise manifestation, et prend congé de l'assemblée.

La Commission procède ensuite à la constitution de son Bureau. A l'unanimité, elle offre la présidence à *M. le Baron Lambermont*.

M. le Baron Lambermont s'exprime en ces termes :—

“ Messieurs,

“ Vous me mettez, souffrez que je vous le dise, dans une position très embarrassante. Pendant la Conférence et depuis, la plupart d'entre vous m'ont comblé d'une série d'attentions et de témoignages répétés de bienveillance, et je crois pouvoir l'ajouter, d'amitié. Ces dettes, je suis loin de les avoir complètement acquittées. Il est délicat, pour un homme si chargé d'obligations, d'en contracter de nouvelles; j'accepte néanmoins la tâche que vous m'offrez, et je l'accepte avec toutes ses conséquences. C'est qu'en effet, à côté des considérations personnelles, il y en a une autre d'un caractère plus pressant et plus élevé. J'ai en vue le but sacré que pendant tant de mois nous avons poursuivi, nous pouvons le dire, à la sueur de notre front, dans une autre assemblée : la rédemption d'une partie malheureuse de l'humanité. Il va de soi qu'en parlant ainsi, je ne songe pas à étendre ou à modifier le programme bien déterminé de la réunion actuelle; mais le travail de la Commission, s'il est mené à bien, peut devenir lui-même un élément de l'entente qui est dans nos vœux à tous. A ce titre, il se recommande à toute votre attention comme à toutes les bonnes volontés et à tous les dévouements. Mon entier concours vous est acquis; j'ose compter, sans vouloir engager les responsabilités de personne, sur une entière réciprocité de votre part.”

M. le Président propose ensuite de procéder à la nomination des Secrétaires.

Il désigne au choix de l'assemblée *MM. Arendt* et *Seeger*, respectivement Directeur-Général et Chef de Division au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères; la Conférence a pu apprécier les services des autres fonctionnaires du Secrétariat, mais en raison de la nature technique des travaux de la Commission, il serait utile d'adjoindre à son Bureau *M. de Cuvelier*, Secrétaire-Général du Département des Affaires Étrangères de l'État du Congo, déjà familiarisé avec les matières dont le Secrétariat aura à rendre compte. Si le surcroît de besogne venait à l'exiger, *M. le Président* se réserve de proposer la nomination d'un quatrième Secrétaire.

Ces propositions sont adoptées.

MM. Arendt, *Seeger*, et *de Cuvelier* sont introduits et prennent place à la table des Secrétaires.

M. le Président dit qu'il reste entendu, conformément à ce qui se pratiquait dans la Conférence et ses différentes Commissions, que les Ministres et anciens Plénipotentiaires auront toujours la faculté d'assister aux séances et de prendre part aux délibérations de l'assemblée.

Sur les observations de plusieurs membres, *M. le Président* fait appel à la discrétion et à la prudence des Délégués en ce qui concerne la communication des renseignements et des documents se rapportant à ses travaux.

M. le Président rappelle ensuite que l'État du Congo a soumis un projet de Tarif aux Puissances par l'intermédiaire du Gouvernement Belge. Ce projet pourrait former l'objet de l'ordre du jour de la séance de demain. En commençant par examiner la quotité des droits, rien n'empêcherait de réserver les autres questions se rapportant au Tarif.

L'assemblée fixe au lendemain, à 2 heures, sa prochaine réunion.

Le Président,
(Signé) **Baron LAMBERMONT.**

Les Secrétaires,
(Signé) **L. ARENDT.**
A. DE CUEVELIER.
CH. SEEGER.

TARIF PROJETÉ de l'État Indépendant du Congo comparé aux Tarifs des autres Pays Africains.

TABLEAU I.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Maroc.	Sénégal.	Gambie.	Archipel du Cap Vert.	Guinée Portugaise.
Armes	10 pour cent de la valeur.	Prohibées	15 pour cent de la valeur. Les armes et munitions de guerre sont exemptes du droit d'octroi de mer à St.-Louis	Fusils et carabines se chargeant par la culasse, 25 fr. pièce. Autres armes à feu, 5 fr. pièce.	N.B.—Les produits Portugais et les marchandises nationalisées ne paient que 30 pour cent des droits ; les marchandises réex- portées, 70 pour cent des mêmes droits.	N.B.—Les produits Portugais et les marchandises nationalisées ne paient que 50 pour cent des droits s'ils sont importés, par navires Portugais.
Poudre à tirer et munitions pour armes à feu.	Id.	Id.	Id.	22 c. par kilog.	20 pour cent de la valeur. . Pièces d'artillerie, prohibées.	Sabres, 45 c. la pièce, plus 10 pour cent des droits. Fusils, 1 fr. 40 c. la pièce, plus 10 pour cent des droits.
Sel	Id.	10 pour cent de la valeur.	7 pour cent de la valeur	9 fr. 22 c. les 1,000 kilog. ..	20 pour cent de la valeur	Poudre, 3 c. par kilog., plus 10 pour cent de droit.
Vins en bouteilles ..	Id.	Id.	7 pour cent de la valeur sur les vins .. Droit d'octroi de mer à St.-Louis : vins ordinaires, en futailles, 6 fr. la barrique, ou 30 c. la caisse de douze bouteilles. Droit d'octroi de mer à Dakar : vins en futailles, 6 fr. la barrique.	27 fr. 50 c. par hectol. ..	En bouteilles, 44 fr. 80 c. par hectol. Champagne, 112 fr. par hectol. Boissons fermentées ou distillées, 56 fr. par hectol.	11 fr. 20 c. par hectol., plus 10 pour cent du droit.
Vins en barils	7 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	Id.	Id.	En futailles, 28 fr. par hectol. ..	Id.
Verroterie (y compris perles, corail).	6 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	7 pour cent de la valeur, plus octroi de mer à St.-Louis : 5 pour cent.	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	20 pour cent de la valeur ..	11 c. par kilog., plus 10 pour cent de ce droit.
Tissus et habillements ..	5 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	Tissus— 7 pour cent de la valeur. Octroi de mer à St.-Louis— Tissus de coton, 1 pour cent. „ laine, 5 pour cent. „ soie, 5 pour cent	Id.	Tissus— De coton— Écrus, unis, sergés, 84 c. le kilog. Blanchis, serrés, &c., 1 fr. 40 c. le kilog.	Draps, 28 c. par kilog., plus 10 pour cent de ce droit. Tissus de coton de l'Inde ou Ber- tangil, 11 c. par kilog., plus 10 pour cent de ce droit. Habillements, exempts.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Maroc.	Sénégal.	Gambie.	Archipel du Cap Vert.	Guinée Portugaise.
Tissus et habillements (suite) —	5 pour cent de la valeur.	10 pour cent de la valeur.	Tissus (suite) — Guinées — Françaises, 25 c. le mètre. Étrangères, 85 c. le mètre. Octroi de la mer à St.-Louis — 1 ^{re} sorte, 10 fr. par balle. 2 ^e sorte, 8 fr. par balle. Habillements — 7 pour cent de la valeur; octroi de mer à St.-Louis, 5 pour cent.	5 pour cent de la valeur	Tissus (suite) — De coton (suite) — Blancs, mousselines, 4 fr. 48 c. le kilog. Teints ou imprimés, 2 fr. 80 c. le kilog. Étamine, 2 fr. 24 c. le kilog. De laine, de 4 fr. 48 c. à 6 fr. 72 c. le kilog. De lin, de 23 c. à 5 fr. 60 c. le kilog. De soie — Pure, 19 fr. 10 c. le kilog. Mêlée, 11 fr. 20 c. le kilog. Habillements, 20 pour cent de la valeur.	
Conserves alimentaires ..	Id.	Id.	7 pour cent de la valeur, plus octroi de mer à St.-Louis, 5 pour cent.	5 pour cent de la valeur	20 pour cent de la valeur ..	Exemptes.
Bières	Id.	Id.	7 pour cent de la valeur, plus 3 fr. 50 c. par hectol. pour les bières en fûts, et 75 c. par caisse ou panier de douze bouteilles, pour les bières importées dans ces emballages, plus octroi de mer à St.-Louis, 5 fr. par hectol.	Id.	En futailles, 28 fr. par hectol. .. En bouteilles, 44 fr. 80 c. par hectol.	
Sucre	Id.	Id.	7 pour cent de la valeur, plus octroi de mer à St.-Louis, 5 fr. par 100 kilog.	22 c. par kilog. ..	Non raffiné, 22 c. par kilog. .. Raffiné, 34 c. par kilog.	Exempt.
Verrerie, faïence, et porce- laine.	4 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	7 pour cent de la valeur, plus octroi de mer à St.-Louis, 5 pour cent.	5 pour cent de la valeur	20 pour cent de la valeur ..	Exemptes.
Quincaillerie (y compris coquillages).	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.	20 pour cent de la valeur	Exempte.
Ouvrages — En fonte En fer En acier En cuivre En plomb En zinc En étain	y compris plaques, feuilles, barres, et fils.	Id.	7 pour cent de la valeur, plus octroi de mer à Dakar, 5 pour cent. 7 pour cent de la valeur .. Id. Id. Id. Id. Id.	Id.	3 c. par kilog. Id. 6 c. et 56 c. par kilog. .. 22 c. et 1 fr. 65 c. par kilog. .. 6 c. et 56 c. par kilog. .. Id. Id.	Exemptes. Id. Id. 14 c. par kilog., plus 10 pour cent de droit. Exemptes. Id. Id.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Maroc.	Sénégal.	Gambie.	Archipel du Cap Vert.	Guinée Portugaise.
Ouvrages en bois (non compris les bois simplement sciés).	4 pour cent de la valeur.	10 pour cent de la valeur.	7 pour cent de la valeur	5 pour cent de la valeur	20 pour cent de la valeur .. Douves, exemptes. Futaillies, exemptes.	Exempts.
Navires et bateaux ..	Exempts	Id.	Id.	Id.	Exempts Agrès d'embarcations, 10 pour cent.	Id.
Machines à vapeur ..	Exempts	Id.	Id.	Id.	Exempts	Exempts.
Appareils mécaniques servant à l'industrie ou à l'agriculture.	Exempts	Id.	Id.	Id.	Exempts	Exempts.
Outils et ustensiles industriels et agricoles.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.
Locomotives et voitures de chemins de fer.	Exempts	Id.	Id.	Id.	Exempts	Exempts.
Instruments de science et de précision.	Exempts	Id.	Id.	Id.	20 pour cent de la valeur	Exempts.

TABLEAU II.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Libéria.	Sierra-Leone.	Colonie Anglaise de la Côte-d'Or.	Établissements Français de la Côte-d'Or.	Possessions Françaises et Allemandes de la Côte des Esclaves.
Armes	10 pour cent ..	Fusils à silex, 2 fr. 7 c. pièce (or) .. Fusils à percussion, 3 fr. 11 c. pièce (or).	Fusils à silex, 3 fr. 12 c. pièce à percussion, 5 fr. pièce. Rifle muzzle loader, 6 fr. 25 c. pièce. Fusils se chargeant par la culasse, à un ou deux coups, 12 fr. 50 c. pièce. Rifle se chargeant par la culasse, 25 fr. pièce.	Fusils et pistolets, 2 fr. 50 c. pièce.	Armes de traite, fusils à silex, 2 fr. pièce. Autres armes, prohibées.	Fusils, 1 fr. 25 c. pièce.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Libéria.	Sierra-Leone.	Colonie Anglaise de la Côte-d'Or.	Établissements Français de la Côte-d'Or.	Possessions Françaises et Allemandes de la Côte des Esclaves.
Poudre à tirer et munitions pour armes à feu.	10 pour cent ..	57 c. le kilog. (or) ..	Cartouches, 6 fr. 26 c. par 100 .. Poudre, 16 fr. les 100 kilog.	Poudre, 136 fr. les 100 kilog. .. Cartouches remplies, 6 fr. 25 c. le 100. Cartouches vides, 1 fr. 25 c. le 100. Amorces, 1 fr. 25 c. le 100. Plombs, 12 c. le kilog.	Poudre de traite, 5 c. le kilog. net	15 fr. 76 c. les 100 kilog.
Sel	Id. ..	6 c. le kilog. (or) ..	4 fr. 61 c. par 1,000 kilog. ..	4 pour cent	Sel marin, 1 fr. les 100 kilog. ..	10 fr. par tonne de 1,000 kilog.
Vins en bouteilles ..	Id. ..	113 fr. 96 c. l'hectol. ..	De Bordeaux (claret), 41 fr. 14 c. l'hectol. Autres, 27 fr. 50 c. l'hectol.	33 fr. 3 c. l'hectol. ..	Titrant moins de 16 degrés, 10 fr. par hectol. Titrant 16 degrés et plus, 15 fr. par hectol. Vermouth et vins aromatique, 30 fr. par hectol. Vins mousseux, 1 fr. par bouteille.	Exempts.
Vins en barils ..	7 pour cent ..					
Verreries (y compris perles, corail).	6 pour cent ..	12½ pour cent <i>ad valorem</i> * ..	5 pour cent	4 pour cent	10 pour cent de la valeur ..	Exempts.
Tissus et habillements ..	5 pour cent ..	Tissus† Habillements† .. Vêtements de dessous pour hommes et femmes, dentelles, broderies, gal- lons, &c., <i>ad valorem</i> 50 pour cent.	Id.	Id.	Tissus de toute sorte, 15 pour cent. Habillements, 10 pour cent.	Exempts.

* Moitié payable en or, moitié en monnaie Libérienne.

† Articles de coton et de laine—	Fr. c.		Fr. c.
Imprimés, croydons, shirting blanc, satin stripes, baft gris et bleu, le mètre	0 05	Habillements complets de soie, pour dames, pièce	15 54 (or)
Mouchoirs du coton, imprimés, en pièces, par mouchoir	0 08	Habillements complets de cachemire, cobourg, mérinos, et autres étoffes de laine, pour dames, pièce	12 95 (or)
Toile pour draps de lit, le mètre	0 12	Habillements complets de calicot imprimé et d'autres étoffes de coton, pour dames, pièce	6 47 (or)
Oxford et autre shirting de couleur, drill bleu et blanc, denims et tweed de coton, le mètre	0 12	Soie, en pièces, le mètre	1 50 (or)
Tweeds de fantaisie, de laine, cachemire de fantaisie, le mètre	0 72 (or)	Cachemire, mérinos, et autres étoffes de laine, le mètre	0 36 (or)
Broad cloth, le mètre	1 44 (or)	Satin, le mètre	0 36 (or)
Habillements de broad cloth, pièce	12 95 (or)	Flanelle ou serge, le mètre	0 30 (or)
Habits de broad cloth, pièce	5 18 (or)	Habillements de flanelle ou de serge, pièce	5 18 (or)
Pantalons, de broad cloth, pièce	2 59 (or)	Habits de flanelle ou de serge, pièce	2 69 (or)
Vestes de broad cloth, pièce	7 77 (or)	Pantalons de flanelle ou de serge, pièce	1 92 (or)
Habillements de tweed cachemire, de fantaisie, pièce	5 18 (or)	Vestes de flanelle ou de serge, pièce	1 29 (or)
Habits de tweed cachemire, de fantaisie, pièce	3 89 (or)	Chemises de laine, pièce	0 62 (or)
Pantalons de tweed cachemire, de fantaisie, pièce	2 59 (or)	.. de coton, pièce	0 62 (or)
Vestes de tweed cachemire, de fantaisie, pièce	2 59 (or)	Chapeaux garnis, pièce	2 59 (or)

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Libéria.	Sierra-Leone.	Colonie Anglaise de la Côte-d'Or.	Établissements Français de la Côte-d'Or.	Possessions Françaises et Allemandes de la Côte des Esclaves.
Conserves alimentaires ..	5 pour cent ..	Poisson séché, 11 c. le kilog. .. salé, 5 fr. 18 le baril. Lard, 11 c. le kilog. Jambon, 23 c. le kilog. Bœuf, 6 fr. 48 c. par baril. Saucisses salées, 34 c. le kilog. Langues de bœuf, 10 fr. 36 c. le baril. Beurre, 68 c. le kilog. Pieds et têtes de porc, 5 fr. 18 c. le baril. Saindoux, 23 c. le kilog.	5 pour cent	4 pour cent	10 pour cent	Exemptes.
Bières	Id. ..	56 fr. 98 c. l'hectol. (or) ..	13 fr. 64 c. l'hectol. .. En caisses, 1 fr. 25 c. par caisse de douze bouteilles. En caisses, 62 c. par douze demi- bouteilles.	33 fr. 3 c. l'hectol. ..	25 fr. par hectol. ..	Id.
Sucre	5 pour cent de la valeur.	Brun, 68 c. le kilog. .. Raffiné, 23 c. le kilog. .. Candi et confiseries, 57 c. le kilog.	Brut, 12 fr. les 100 kilog. .. Raffiné, 24 fr. les 100 kilog. ..	4 pour cent	10 pour cent	Exempt.
Verrerie, faïence, et porce- laine.	4 pour cent de la valeur.	12½ pour cent <i>ad valorem</i> * .. Assiettes ordinaires, par douzaine, 62 c. Bassins— De 12 pouces et moins, par dou- zaine, 62 c. De plus de 12 pouces, par dou- zaine, 30 c.	5 pour cent	Id.	20 fr. les 100 kilog. ..	Exemptes.
Quincaillerie (y compris coquillages),	Id. ..	Poêles, marmites, chaudrons, &c., — en fer, 11 c. le kilog. Coutelas ou serpes, 1 fr. 30 c. par douzaine.	8 fr. 60 c. les 100 kilog. ..	Id.	10 pour cent Coutellerie, 50 fr. les 100 kilog. ..	Exempte.

* Moitié payable en or, moitié en monnaie Libérienne.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Libéria.	Sierra Leone.	Colonie Anglaise de la Côte-d'Or.	Établissements Français de la Côte-d'Or.	Possessions Françaises et Allemandes de la Côte des Esclaves.
Ouvrages— En fonte En fer En acier En cuivre En plomb En zinc En étain	y compris plaques, feuilles, barres, et fils. 4 pour cent	12½ pour cent* .. 12½ pour cent* fer galvanisé et cap- ping, clous, rondelles et vis en fer galvanisé, 6 c. le kilog.† Acier en barres, 23 c. le kilog. 12½ pour cent* Chaudrons en cuivre, 68 c. le kilog. (or). 12½ pour cent* Id.* Autres ouvrages, 12½ pour cent*	5 pour cent ..	4 pour cent ..	Ouvrages en fonte, 20 fr. les 100 kilog. Ouvrages en fer et en fer blanc, 20 fr. les 100 kilog. Fer en barres, 4 fr. les 100 kilog. Ouvrages en acier, en cuivre, 20 fr. les 100 kilog. Ouvrages en plomb, 10 pour cent. Plomb en barres, masses, et plaques, 10 fr. les 100 kilog. Ouvrages en zinc, 10 pour cent.	Exempts.
Ouvrages en bois (non com- pris les bois simplement sciés).	Id. ..	12½ pour cent* ..	Id. ..	Id. .. Douves, exemptes.	10 pour cent .. Futailles, 3 fr. la pièce. Moblier des immigrants, exempt.	Id.
Navires et bateaux ..	Exempts ..	Id.* ..	Id. ..	4 pour cent ..	10 pour cent ..	Id.
Machines à vapeur ..	Exempts ..	Exempts ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Exempts.
Appareils mécaniques ser- vant à l'industrie ou à l'agriculture.	Exempts ..	Exempts ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Exempts.
Outils et ustensiles indus- triels et agricoles.	Id. ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Outils de toute sorte, 25 fr. les 100 kilog.	Id.
Locomotives et voitures de chemins de fer.	Exempts ..	12½ pour cent* .. Locomotives (voir "Machines à vapeur").	Id. ..	Id. ..	10 pour cent ..	Exempts.
Instruments de science et de précision.	Exempts ..	12½ pour cent* ..	Id. ..	Exempts ..	Id. ..	Exempts.

* Moitié payable en or, moitié en monnaie Libérienne.

† Fer feuillard, rivets, clous à crochets, &c., exemptes.

TABLEAU III.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Établissements Français du Golfe de Benin.	Lagos.	Protectorat Anglais du Niger. (Zone maritime.)	Colonie Allemande de Cameroun.	Iles Saint-Thomas et du Prince.	Gabon.
Armes	10 pour cent de la valeur.	Fusils, 1 fr. 25 c. pièce ..	Fusils, 1 fr. 25 c. pièce .. Pistolets, 7 fr. 50 c. pièce..	Armes à feu, 100 pour cent <i>ad valorem</i>	Fusils de toute sorte, 1 fr. 25 c. pièce.	N.B.—Les produits Portugais et les marchandises nationalisées ne payent que 30 pour cent des droits. 20 pour cent Pièces d'artillerie, prohibées.	N.B.—Les marchandises Fran- çaises ne payent que 40 pour cent. De traite, fusils à silex, 2 fr. pièce. Autres (autorisées), 20 pour cent de la valeur.
Poudre à tirer et munitions pour armes à feu.	Id.	Poudre, 13 fr. 77 c. par 100 kilog.	Poudre à tirer, 1 fr. 72 c. par 100 kilog.	Id.	Poudre ordinaire, 13 c. le kilog. Poudre de chasse, 25 c. le kilog.	Poudre à tirer, 84 c. par kilog. ..	Poudre à tirer, de chasse, 4 fr. le kilog. Poudre de traite, 30 c. le kilog. Cartouches à balles, 4 fr. le 100. " à plomb, 3 fr. le 100. Capsules et douilles amorcées, 75 c. le kilog. net. Plomb de chasse, 5 fr. les 100 kilog. brut.
Sel	Id.	10 fr. par 1,000 kilog. ..	6 fr. 25 c. les 1,000 kilog.	2 fr. 45. c. par 100 kilog.	5 fr. les 1,000 kilog. ..	1 fr. 12 c. par hectol.	Sel marin et sel gemme, 40 c. les 100 kilog.
Vins en bouteilles ..	Id.	Exempts	Par douzaine de bouteilles, 2 fr. 50 c.	2 pour cent	Exempts	En bouteilles, 44 fr. 80 c. par hectol.	Vins titrant moins de 16 degrés, 5 fr. par hectol. Vins titrant 16 degrés et plus, 10 fr. par hectol. Vermouth et vins aromatisés, 30 fr. par hectol. Vins mousseux, 40 c. la bouteille.
Vins en barils	7 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	Par hectol., 27 fr. 50 c. ..	Id.	Id.	En fûtailles, 28 fr. par hectol.	
Verreries (y compris perles, corail).	6 pour cent de la valeur.	Exempts	4 pour cent	Id.	Exempts	20 pour cent	10 pour cent de la valeur

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Établissements Français du Golfe de Benin.	Lagos.	Protectorat Anglais du Niger. (Zone Maritime.)	Colonie Allemande de Cameroon.	Iles Saint-Thomas et du Prince.	Gabon.
Tissus et habillements ..	5 pour cent de la valeur.	Exempts	4 pour cent	2 pour cent	Exempts	Tissus— De coton— Écrus, unis, croisés, 1 fr. 12 c. par kilog. Blanchis, coutils, 1 fr. 68 c. par kilog. Teints, rayés, &c., 2 fr. 24 c. par kilog. Imprimés, peints, indiennes, &c., 2 fr. 80 c. par kilog. De lin, 1 fr. 56 c. à 2 fr. 30 c. par kilog. De laine, 2 fr. 24 c. à 5 fr. 4 c. par kilog. De soie, 8 fr. 40 c. à 14 fr. par kilog. Habillements, 20 pour cent.	Tissus— De lin, chauxvre, et coton, laine, soie, jute, 10 pour cent. Teints ou imprimés, un droit supplémentaire de 10 pour cent. Habillements, 10 pour cent. Chapeaux, 20 c. pièce.
Conserves alimentaires ..	Id.	Exemptes	Id.	Id.	Exemptes	15 pour cent	Lard et porc salé, 5 fr. les 100 kilog. Jambons et langues fumés, 10 fr. les 100 kilog. Saucissons, 10 fr. les 100 kilog. Poissons secs, salés ou fumés, 60 c. par 100 kilog. Homards, langoustes, 10 fr. par 100 kilog. Autres conserves, 10 fr. les 100 kilog.
Bières	Id.	Id.	Par hectol., 10 fr. 30 c. .. Par douzaine de bouteilles, 94 c.	Id.	Id.	En futaillies, 28 fr. par hectol. ..	5 fr. par hectol.
Sucre	5 pour cent de la valeur.	Exempt	4 pour cent	Id.	Exempt	20 pour cent	Sucres bruts, 5 fr. les 100 kilog. ,, raffinés, 8 fr. les 100 kilog.
Verrerie, faïence, et porce- laine.	4 pour cent de la valeur.	Exemptes	Id.	Id.	Exemptes	Id.	Porcelaines et faïences, 2 fr. les 100 kilog. Verres, cristaux, glaces, 15 fr. les 100 kilog.
Quincaillerie (y compris coquillages).	Id.	Exempte	Id.	Id.	Exempte	Id.	10 pour cent. Coutellerie, 40 fr. les 100 kilog.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Établissements Français du Golfe de Benin.	Lagos.	Protectorat Anglais du Niger. (Zone maritime.)	Colonie Allemande de Cameroon.	Iles Saint-Thomas et du Prince.	Gabon.
Ouvrages— En fonte En fer En acier En cuivre En plomb En zinc En étain	y compris plaques, feuilles, et barres, et fils. } 4 pour cent de la valeur.	Exempts ..	4 pour cent ..	2 pour cent ..	Exempts ..	20 pour cent. 3 c. et 56 c. par kilog. 6 c. et 56 c. " 22 c. et 1 fr. 68 c. par kilog. 6 c. et 56 c. par kilog. Id. .. " 20 pour cent. "	4 fr. les 100 kilog. Id. Id. 12 fr. les 100 kilog. 6 fr. " 6 fr. " 12 fr. "
Ouvrages en bois (non com- pris les bois simplement sciés).	Id. ..	Id. ..	Id. .. Poinçons, douves avec les cercles en fer, les rivets ou crochets destinés à les réunir, exempts.	Id. ..	Id. ..	15 pour cent .. Douves, futailles, baquets, &c., exempts.	5 fr. les 100 kilog. Futailles, exempts.
Navires et bateaux ..	Exempts ..	Id. ..	4 pour cent ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Exempts.	1 fr. 50 c. le tonneau de jauge.
Machines à vapeur ..	Exempts ..	Exempts ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Exempts ..	Exempts.	10 pour cent. Françaises, exempts.
Appareils mécaniques ser- vant à l'industrie ou à l'agriculture.	Exempts ..	Exempts ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Exempts ..	Exempts.	10 pour cent de la valeur.
Outils et ustensiles indus- triels et agricoles.	Id. ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	8 fr. les 100 kilog.
Locomotives et voitures de chemins de fer.	Exempts ..	Exempts ..	Id. ..	Id. ..	Exempts ..	Exempts ..	10 pour cent (voir "Machines à vapeur").
Instruments de science et de précision.	Exempts ..	Exempts ..	Exempts ..	Id. ..	Exempts ..	15 pour cent ..	Exempts. Bésicles, lunettes, lorgnons, ju- melles, 100 fr. les 100 kilog.

TABLEAU IV.

[608]	Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo.	Port d'Ambriz.	Loanda, Benguela, et Mossamedès.	Union Douanière Sud-Africaine.	Natal.	Swaziland.	République Sud-Africaine.
		Tarif Proposé.			Cap.—État d'Orange.			
				[Les denrées et marchandises produits du sol et de l'industrie du royaume et des îles adjacentes payeront, quand ils seront importés directement, 30 pour cent des droits seulement; lorsqu'ils seront réexportés du royaume dans la Province d'Angola, 70 pour cent.]				
	Armes	10 pour cent de la valeur.	6 pour cent de la valeur.	Fusils propres au commerce avec les naturels, 3 fr. 36 pièce. De tout autre système, 16 fr. 80 c. pièce. Pièces d'artillerie: prohibées, à l'exception de celles pour l'État.	Fusils et canons de fusils, chaque canon, 25 fr. Pistolets et canons de pistolets, chaque canon, 6 fr. 25 c.	Fusils et canons de fusils, chaque canon, 25 fr. Pistolets, canons, et jeux de canons de pistolets, par canon, 6 fr. 25 c.	Fusils et canons de fusils, la pièce, 12 fr. 50 c. Pistolets et canons de pistolets, la pièce, 6 fr. 25 c.	Fusils et pistolets, 12 fr. 50 c. pièce.*
	Poudre à tirer et munitions pour armes à feu			Poudre à tirer, 1 fr. le kilog. ..	Poudre à feu, 1 fr. 36 c. le kilog. Dynamite, 68 c. le kilog.	Poudre, le kilog., 1 fr. 36 c. ..	Cartouches, 50 fr. le 1,000 .. Douilles de cartouches, 25 fr. le 1,000. Poudre à tirer, 92 c. le kilog. Plombs de chasse, 69 c. le kilog.	Cartouches de papier, carton, cuivre, ou autre métal, chargées, pour fusils se chargeant par la culasse, 6 fr. 25 c. le 1,000.* Poudre à tirer, 1 fr. 38 c. le kilog.* Dynamite, 23 c. le kilog.* Plomb de chasse, 69 c. le kilog.*
	Sel	Id.	Id.	Sel indigène, libre Autre, 34 c. le décalitre ..	Sel gemme, 24 c. les 100 kilog. .. Autre, 61 c. les 100 kilog.	5 pour cent de la valeur .. Sel gemme, 24 c. les 100 kilog.	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	5 pour cent de la valeur.
	Vins en bouteilles ..	Id.	Id.	4 fr. 48 c. le décalitre ..	Vins— En bouteilles de 6 pour 4½ litres, la douzaine, 15 fr. En bouteilles de 12 pour 4½ litres, la douzaine, 7 fr. 50 c. En bouteilles autres ou en fûts, 1 fr. 65 c. le litre.	Vins— Monseaux, 1 fr. 38 c. le litre. De Pontac, 55 c. le litre .. De Bordeaux, 41 c. le litre .. Autres, 1 fr. 10 c. le litre .. Vins destinés au Gouverneur ou aux officiers de l'armée, exempts.	Id.	Id.
2 P	Vins en barils ..			2 fr. 24 c. le décalitre. Champagne, 11 fr. 20 c. le décalitre.				

* Plus un droit additionnel de 5 pour cent de la valeur.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Port d'Ambriz.	Loanda, Benguela, et Mossamédès.	Union Douanière Sud- Africaine. — Cap.—État d'Orange.	Natal.	Swasiland.	République Sud-Africaine.
Verroteries (y compris perles, corail)	6 pour cent de la valeur.	6 pour cent de la valeur.	25 pour cent de la valeur.	Perles de verre (beads), 46 c. le kilog.	Verroterie, 46 c. le kilog. ..	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	Perles de la Cafrerie, 2 fr. 74 c. le kilog.
Tissus et habillements..	5 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	Coton : tissus écrus, unis, croisés, toiles à voiles, 84 c. le kilog. Tissus blancs ou de couleur, en couvertures et molletons, 1 fr. 12 c. le kilog. Tissus blanchis, 1 fr. 40 c. le kilog. Tissus teints en fil, imprimés, peints, indiennes, à taies, mouchoirs, velours, tricotés, et autres, 2 fr. 24 c. le kilog. Pannes, bombasins, 10 pour cent de la valeur. Tissus de laine, de 2 fr. 24 c. 3 fr. 92 c. le kilog. Tissus de lin, de 28 c. à 2 fr. 80 c. le kilog. Tissus de soie, de 8 fr. 40 c. à 14 fr. le kilog. Habillements, droits du tissu principal, plus 50 pour cent.	12 pour cent de la valeur ..	Couvertures et draps en coton simples, par paire ou en pièce, valeur, 10 pour cent. Couvertures et couvertures de voyage en laine, et tissus de laine et coton employés comme couvertures simples par paire ou en pièce (rugs), valeur, 10 pour cent. Autres tissus, 5 pour cent de la valeur. Habits et jaquettes en bayettes ou en tissu pour couverture, valeur, 10 pour cent.	Id.	5 pour cent de la valeur.
Conserves alimentaires.	Id.	Id.	20 pour cent de la valeur ..	Lard et jambon, 46 c. le kilog. ... Viande salée ou conservée, 46 c. le kilog. Pickles et sauces, 46 c. le kilog. Légumes conservés, 46 c. le kilog. Gingembre sec, chow-chow, et conserves similaires, 69 c. le kilog. Poissons conservés, 46 c. le kilog.	Lard, jambon, et siandoux, 46 c. le kilog. ; beurre, butyrine, et autres succédanés du beurre, 69 c. le kilog. ; viande salée ou en boîtes de fer blanc, poisson fumé, 23 c. le kilog. ; marmelades, confitures, com- potes, confiseries, fruits en bouteilles ou en boîtes ; légumes en boîtes ou en tablettes, condiments (pickles), sauces, 23 c. le kilog. ; fro- mage, 69 c. le kilog. ; fruits secs ou en conserves de toute espèce, 46 c. le kilog.	Beurre, 46 c. le kilog. .. Biscuits, 23 c. le kilog. Bonbons de toute sorte, 5 pour cent de la valeur. Fromage, 69 c. le kilog. Fruits secs, 69 c. le kilog. Poisson sec ou en boîtes de con- serve, 46 c. le kilog. Confitures gelées, 5 pour cent de la valeur. Lait concentré, 10 pour cent de la valeur. Viande conservée, 5 pour cent de la valeur. Poivre et curry (condiment), 69 c. le kilog. Bœuf ou porc en conserve, 10 pour cent de la valeur. Sauces, 10 pour cent de la valeur.	Viande de porc, saindoux, jambon, lard, et saucisses, 275 fr. 33 c. les 100 kilog.* Fruits et légumes conservés, 55 fr. les 100 kilog.* Viande conservée, 10 pour cent de la valeur.* Pâtisserie, biscuits, et gâteaux en boîtes, 137 fr. les 100 kilog.*

* Plus un droit additionnel de 5 pour cent de la valeur.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Port d'Ambriz.	Loanda, Benguela, et Mossamedès.	Union Douanière Sud-Africaine. — Cap.—État d'Orange.	Natal.	Swaziland.	République Sud-Africaine.
Bières	5 pour cent de la valeur.	6 pour cent de la valeur.	En futaillies, 2 fr. 24 c. le décalitre. En bouteilles, 4 fr. 48 c. le décalitre.	Ale et bière, 34 c. le litre ..	Ale, bière, et cidre, 21 c. le litre	Ale et bière en bouteilles et en fûts, 27 fr. 50 c. l'hectol.	82 fr. 50 c. l'hectol.*
Sucre	Id.	Id.	Sucre indigène, libre .. Autre— Raffiné, 22 c. le kilog. Non raffiné, 11 c. le kilog.	Sucre et mélasse, 17 fr. 20 c. les 100 kilog.	Sucre brut, 8 fr. 68 c. les 100 kilog. Sucre raffiné, 23 c. le kilog.	Sucre candi, valeur 5 pour cent. Sucre, 6 fr. les 100 kilog.	13 fr. 76 c. les 100 kilog.*
Verrerie, faïence, et porcelaine	4 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	25 pour cent de la valeur.	12 pour cent de la valeur .. Bouteilles en verre commun importées pleines de liquide passible de droits, exemptes.	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	5 pour cent de la valeur.
Quincallerie (y compris coquillages)	Id.	Id.	Id.	12 pour cent de la valeur ..	Id.	Id.	Id.
Ouvrages— En fonte En fer En acier En cuivre En plomb En zinc En étain	} y compris plaques, feuilles, barres, et fils. Id.	Id.	03 c. le kilog. .. 56 c. " .. 56 c. " .. 1 fr. 68 c. le kilog. .. 56 c. le kilog. .. 56 c. " .. 20 pour cent de la valeur	Métal de composition et doublages en métal de composition, 10 pour cent de la valeur. Fer en barres, rondes ou carrées, fer à boulons, 10 pour cent de la valeur. Fils métalliques, exemptes. Fonte de fer, exemptes. Ancres et câbles-chaines à l'usage des navires, exemptes. Esioux, boîtes de roues, ressorts pour charrettes, voitures, et autres véhicules à roues, 10 pour cent de la valeur. Matériel pour construction de chemins de fer et tramways, exempt. Articles non dénommés, 12 pour cent.	Métaux ouvrés, 5 pour cent de la valeur. Fer brut et fonte en gueuses, exemptes. Tôles de fer non ondulées, exemptes. Fer et acier en barres, exemptes. Fonte et lingots d'acier, exemptes. Fils de fer et d'acier pour clôtures, exemptes. Cuivre et métal jaune en feuilles pour doublage des navires, exemptes. Plomb pour cuisses à thé, exemptes.	Id.	Fils de cuivre, 1 fr. 37 c. le kilog.* Houes et pics de la Cafrerie, 1 fr. 25 c. pièce.*
Ouvrages en bois (non compris les bois simplement sciés)				Voitures, charrettes, wagons, et autres véhicules à roues, brouettes, 20 pour cent de la valeur. Id. fabriqués dans l'Afrique du Sud et importés par terre, exemptes.	3 pour cent de la valeur ..	Id.	5 pour cent de la valeur.

* Plus un droit additionnel de 5 pour cent de la valeur.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Port d'Ambriz.	Loanda, Benguela, et Mossamedès.	Union Douanière Sud- Africaine. — Cap. — État d'Orange.	Natal.	Swaziland.	République Sud-Africaine.
Navires et bateaux ..	Exempts ..	6 pour cent de la valeur.	Exempts	12 pour cent. de la valeur .. Ancres et câbles chaînes à l'usage des navires, exempts.	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	5 pour cent de la valeur.
Machines à vapeur ..	Exempts ..	Id.	Exempts	Exempts	Exempts	Machines de toute espèce, exempts.*	Machines de toute sorte, 1½ pour cent de la valeur.*
Appareils mécaniques servant à l'industrie ou à l'agriculture.	Exempts ..	Id.	Exempts	Id.	Exempts	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	Id.
Outils et ustensiles in- dustriels et agricoles.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Pies et hoes pour Cafres, 62 c. pièce. Autres, 10 pour cent de la valeur.	Pies et hoes de Cafres, 62 c. pièce. Autres, 5 pour cent de la valeur.	Hoes et pies, 10 c. pièce. .. Autres, 5 pour cent de la valeur.	5 pour cent de la valeur.
Locomotives et voitures de chemins de fer.	Exempts ..	Id.	Exempts	Exempts Matériel pour construction de lignes télégraphiques dans l'Union, exempt.	5 pour cent de la valeur (voir aussi: "Machines à vapeur.")	5 pour cent de la valeur (voir aussi: "Machines à vapeur.")	5 pour cent de la valeur (voir "Machines").
Instruments de science et de précision.	Exempts ..	Id.	20 pour cent de la valeur ..	12 pour cent de la valeur ..	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	5 pour cent de la valeur ..	5 pour cent de la valeur.

* Les autres objets, tels que outils, instruments, wagons, &c., payent 5 pour cent de valeur.

TABLEAU V.

[809]	Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo.	Distriet de Cabo Delgado.	Province de Mozambique.	Madagascar.	Zanzibar.	Possessions Italiennes de la Mer Rouge.	Egypte.
		Tarif Proposé.	Mozambique.					
				Produits Portugais, 50 pour cent des droits. Les droits d'entrée doivent être augmentés d'un cinquième.			Le droit d'entrée est de 8 pour cent de la valeur des marchan- dises. Le prix de l'évaluation subit une déduction de 10 pour cent lorsque la valeur de la marchandise est supérieure à 10 fr. Cette déduction n'a pas lieu lorsque la déclaration est faite d'après facture. Les produits Italiens sont exempts de droits.*	
	Armes	10 pour cent de la valeur.	5 pour cent de la valeur.	Fusils, canons de fusils, et re- volvers, 8 fr. 40 c. pièce. Pistolets et canons de pistolets, 2 fr. 80 c. pièce.	10 pour cent de la valeur.	5 pour cent de la valeur	8 pour cent de la valeur	7-20 pour cent de la valeur.
	Poudre à tirer et munitions pour armes à feu.	Id.	Id.	Plombs de munition, 6 pour cent de la valeur. Poudre à tirer, 56 c. le kilog.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.
	Sel	Id.	Id.	3 pour cent de la valeur	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.
	Vins en bouteilles	Id.	Id.	22 c. le litre	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.
	Vins en barils ..	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.
	Verroteries (y compris perles, corail).	6 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	28 c. le kilog.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.
	Tissus et habillements	5 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	Tissus de coton— Serrés, unis, sergés ou croisés blanchis, y compris les mou- choirs, 50 c. le kilog. Imprimés, teints, y compris les mouchoirs, 90 c. le kilog. Tous autres tissus de coton, 10 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.

149

* Aucun droit n'est perçu dans la possession d'Assab.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo.			District de Cabo Delgado. Mozambique.	Province of Mozambique.	Madagascar.	Zanzibar.	Possessions Italiennes de la Mer Rouge.	Egypte.
	Tarif Proposé.								
Tissus et habillements— (suite)—	..			..	Tissus de laine, de lin, de soie, &c., 10 pour cent de la valeur. Habilllements, droits des tissus selon l'espèce.	..	..	..	..
Conserves alimentaires ..	Id.	..	..	5 pour cent de la valeur.	Huile d'olive, 11 c. le litre .. Beurre, 45 c. le kilog. Autres conserves, 3 pour cent de la valeur.	10 pour cent de la valeur.	5 pour cent de la valeur	8 pour cent de la valeur	7 20 pour cent de la valeur.
Bières ..	Id.	..	..	Id.	11 c. le litre ..	Id.	La bière ayant moins de 20 pour cent d'alcool, 5 pour cent de la va- leur; plus de 20 pour cent, 25 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	Id.
Sucre ..	5 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	..	Id.	17 c. le kilog. ..	Id.	5 pour cent de la valeur	Id.	Id.
Verrerie, faïence, et porce- laine.	4 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	..	Id.	3 pour cent de la valeur	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.
Quincaillerie (y compris coquillages).	Id.	..	..	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.
Ouvrages— En fonte En fer En acier En cuivre En plomb En zinc En étain	y compris plaques, feuilles, barres, et fils,			Id.	6 pour cent de la valeur Bêches non employées en agricul- ture (caféas), 30 c. pièce.	Id.	Id.*	Id.	Id.
Ouvrages en bois (non com- pris les bois simplement sciés).	Id.	..	..	Id.	3 pour cent de la valeur	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.
Navires et bateaux ..	Exempts	..	..	Id.	Embarcations neuves, 5 pour cent de la valeur.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.

* Les machines, outils d'agriculture, le matériel destiné à la construction et à l'entretien des routes, tramways ou chemins de fer, destinés aux pays de l'intérieur, situés à l'ouest des domaines du Sultan, exempts.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	District de Cabo Delgado. — Mozambique.	Province de Mozambique.	Madagascar.	Zanzibar.	Possessions Italiennes de la Mer Rouge.	Égypte.
Machines à vapeur ..	Exemptes	5 pour cent de la valeur.	3 pour cent de la valeur ..	10 pour cent de la valeur	5 pour cent de la valeur*	8 pour cent de la valeur ..	7-20 pour cent de la valeur.
Appareils mécaniques ser- vant à l'industrie ou à l'agriculture.	Exemptes	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.*	Id.	Id.
Outils et ustensiles indus- triels et agricoles.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.*	Id.	Id.
Locomotives et voitures de chemins de fer.	Exemptes	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.*	Id.	Id.
Instruments de science et de précision.	Exemptes	Id.	Id.	Id.	Id.*	Id.	Id.

* Les machines, outils d'agriculture, le matériel destiné à la construction et à l'entretien des routes, tramways ou chemins de fer, destinés aux pays de l'intérieur, situés à l'ouest des domaines du Sultan, exempts.

TABLEAU VI.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo. — Tarif Proposé.	Tripolitaine.	Tunis.	Algérie.
Armes	10 pour cent de la valeur	8 pour cent de la valeur	8 pour cent de la valeur. Armes et munitions de guerre, prohibées.	•
Poudre à tirer et munitions pour armes à feu.	Id.	Id.	Douilles, bourres, exemptes. Poudre de tir et de nitro-dynamite et matières similaires, prohibées.	
Sel	Id.	Exploité en régie	Prohibé.	
Vins en bouteilles ..	Id.	Les vins à 18 degrés payent 18 pour cent de la valeur indépen- damment des droits d'accise.	10 pour cent de la valeur.	
Vins en barils	Id.	Id.	Id.	
Verroteries (y compris perles, corail).	6 pour cent de la valeur	8 pour cent de la valeur	8 pour cent de la valeur.	
Tissus et habillements ..	5 pour cent de la valeur	Id.	Id.	
Conserves alimentaires ..	Id.	Id.	Id. Gibier mort ou vivant et les volailles mortes ou vivantes, exemptes.	
Bières	Id.	Id.	8 pour cent de la valeur.	
Sucre	5 pour cent de la valeur	Id.	Id.	
Verrerie, faïence, et porce- laine.	4 pour cent de la valeur	Id.	Id.	
Quincallerie (y compris coquillages).	Id.	Id.	Id.	
Ouvrages— En fonte En fer En acier En cuivre En plomb En zinc En étain	y compris plaques, feuilles, barres, et fils.	Id.	Id.	

• Les produits Français sont exempts, hormis les sucres.
A l'exception de quelques marchandises soumises à des taxes
spéciales, les marchandises étrangères sont frappées des mêmes
droits que si elles étaient importées en France.
Certains produits sont passibles, indépendamment des droits
d'entrée, d'un droit d'octroi de mer applicable aux produits
de toute origine.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Bassin Conventionnel du Congo.			Tripolitaine.			Tunisie.	Algérie,	
Ouvrages en bois (non compris les bois simplement sciés).	4 pour cent de la valeur			8 pour cent de la valeur			.. 8 pour cent de la valeur.		
Navires et bateaux ..	Exempts	..	..	Id. ..	..	..	.. Id.		
Machines à vapeur ..	Id. ..	..	..	Id. ..	..	..	.. Id.		
Appareils mécaniques servant à l'industrie ou à l'agriculture.	Id. ..	..	..	Id. ..	..	..	.. Id.*		* Instruments et machines servant à l'agriculture, importés par les propriétaires pour leur propre exploitation et non pour en faire le commerce, exempts.
Outils et ustensiles industriels et agricoles.	Id. ..	..	..	Id. ..	..	..	.. Id.		
Locomotives et voitures de chemins de fer.	Id. ..	..	..	Id. ..	..	..	.. Id.		
Instruments de science et de précision.	Id. ..	..	..	Id. ..	..	..	.. Id.		

No. 193.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.(No. 63. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.*Foreign Office, November 11, 1890, 1.50 P.M.*

ON the understanding that differential treatment shall be carefully excluded, and that the Tariffs will be submitted for approval to the Commission, we agree to separate common Tariffs for the East and West Coasts.

No. 194.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 275.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 11, 1890.

I HAVE to request your Lordship to convey to M. Émile Banning my thanks for the interesting paper on the origin and Acts of the Brussels Conference, lately presented by him to the Royal Academy of Belgium, and of which copies were inclosed in your Lordship's despatch No. 261 of the 30th ultimo.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 195.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(No. 25.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 11, 1890.

WITH reference to my No. 24 of the 6th instant, I transmit herewith, for your information, copies of correspondence, as marked in the margin,* with the Belgian and Dutch Representatives at this Court, and with Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels, on the subject of the imposition of import duties in the Basin of the Congo.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 196.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Baron Solvyns.

M. le Ministre,

Foreign Office, November 11, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the note of the 4th instant, in which you were so good as to communicate to me the alternative proposals of the Dutch Government for the solution of the question of indemnifying the Congo State for expenses incurred in carrying out the duties imposed by the provisions of the Brussels Congo Act.

I have, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 197.

Foreign Office to Aborigines Protection Society.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 11, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, inclosing copies of Memorials which were addressed by your Society to His Majesty the King of the Belgians and His Majesty the King of the Netherlands.

I am, &c.

(Signed) P. CURRIE.

* Nos. 139 and 166; and to Lord Vivian, No. 262.

No. 200 A.

Board of Trade to Foreign Office.—(Received November 12.)

Sir,

Board of Trade, London, November 12, 1890.

I AM directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, transmitting, by direction of the Marquis of Salisbury, despatches from Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels and from the British Delegates to the Technical Commission now sitting at Brussels, on the subject of the proposed Tariffs of import duties for the conventional Basin of the Congo.

As intimated in your letter the new proposal in regard to the Tariff system for the region embraced in the conventional Congo Basin is for separate Customs Tariffs to be elaborated for the Western and Eastern regions, the former including the territories of France, Portugal, and the Congo Free State, and the latter those of the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy. Both these Tariffs, it is proposed, would be within the limit of 10 per cent. *ad valorem* as the maximum rate of duty sanctioned by the Declaration annexed to the General Act of the Brussels Conference of 1889-90, and would not be differential in the sense of favouring national produce of the Powers named, or any of them. As regards the West African coast, however, it has to be noticed that the Tariff would be framed by France, Portugal, and the Congo State, and it is possible that, by placing low duties on such goods as are produced in the two first-mentioned countries, as compared with higher rates on the classes of goods produced in other countries, the Tariff might be made practically differential, though not so in name. At the same time, if the Tariff has to be submitted to the full Congress, it will be practicable to guard against this danger. On the other hand, as regards the East Coast territories, it is presumed that the Tariff would be fixed by the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy, and if the Tariff adopted is not differential either directly or indirectly, and is besides approved by the full Congress, the Board can see no objection to the adherence of this country being given to the course proposed.

The documents forwarded with your letter are returned herewith in accordance with your request.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. GIFFEN.

No. 200 B.

Sir J. Kirk to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 13, 10.15 P.M.)

(No. 5. Tariff.)
(Telegraphic.)

Brussels, November 13, 1890, 7.12 P.M.

AT meeting to-day we defined conditions on which we could consider separate Tariffs as stated in your despatch No. 2 and Board of Trade letter of yesterday.

French insisted on autonomy of each State, holding that inevitably neighbours must work together; instructions did not allow France to submit Tariff of her possessions for sanction of Commission as we proposed.

Our view supported by Germany, Italy, and Turkey; America is also with us, no one openly supporting French view.

President proposed that leaving this fundamental question for future decision, we might provisionally form Eastern and Western Sub-Committees, composed respectively of territorial Powers, to discuss Tariffs, hoping that thus difficulties may be overcome. Have we sanction to do so under all reserve?

Next meeting Tuesday.

No. 198.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 12.)

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, November 12, 1890.

WE have the honour to report that the meeting of the Congo Tariff Commission, originally fixed for yesterday, has been postponed until to-morrow, at the request of the French Minister.

No. 199.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 278. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 12, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 262, Africa, of the 4th instant, I transmit herewith, for your Lordship's information, copy of a note from the Belgian Minister at this Court,* communicating the alternative proposals of the Dutch Government for indemnifying the Congo State for expenses incurred by carrying out the duties imposed by the provisions of the Brussels Act.

Your Lordship has been made aware, by my despatch above referred to, of the views entertained by Her Majesty's Government on the proposals. I shall be glad to learn whether it is the intention of the Powers addressed, as far as you are able to ascertain from your colleagues, to send a reply to the note through the Belgian Government, or whether you will be able, under your instructions, to deal with the proposals in the Commission, in concert with the Representatives of the other Powers when they shall have ascertained the views of their respective Governments.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 200.

The Marquis of Salisbury to the British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference.

(No. 2.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 12, 1890.

I INCLOSE copy of a letter from the Board of Trade, giving the views of the Board upon the proposal to separate the Tariffs, applying one system to the territories comprised in the eastern portion, and another to those comprised in the western portion, of the conventional basin of the Congo.

I concur with the views of the Board, and authorize you to support the proposal. But it must be distinctly understood that effectual provision must be made against the introduction, under cover of the system, of any differential treatment of goods, direct or indirect. In this respect Her Majesty's Government hold that the privileges enjoyed under the Berlin Act cannot be surrendered nor abated.

They further hold that it will be essential that each of the separate Tariffs shall be submitted, in every detail, for the consideration and approval of the Commission.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 201.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 14.)

(No. 24. Africa.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, November 9, 1890.

IN obedience to your Lordship's instructions, conveyed to me by telegraph on the 5th instant (dated the 4th), on the subject of the Congo Duties Commission, and repeating a telegram from Lord Vivian of the previous day's Conference, No. 60, I have the honour to report as follows.

* No. 166.

On inquiry at the Sublime Porte, I ascertained that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was desirous to instruct Carothéodory Effendi, the Ottoman Minister at Brussels, to represent the Sublime Porte on this Commission, and that his Excellency had applied to the Sultan for His Imperial Majesty's Iradé authorizing this proceeding.

As I observed that this might cause delay, I sent Sir Alfred Sandison to the Palace to recommend a prompt decision, and I am happy to be able to report that the Iradé was issued last night, and instructions to Carathéodory Effendi were forwarded at once.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. A. WHITE.

No. 202.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 14.)

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

The Hague, November 14, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship, confidentially, that his Excellency M. Hartsen suggests the following solution of the Congo Import Duties question.

He has expressed the hope that, on the termination of the sittings of the Tariff Commission, the Powers should instruct their Representatives at Brussels to meet for the purpose of considering the counter-proposals already made by the Netherlands Government.

His Excellency is quite prepared for their rejection; but he considers the fact of their being discussed would satisfy public opinion in this country that the Dutch Government have opposed the imposition of import duties to the utmost extent possible without seriously involving their friendly relations with the other Powers of Europe.

The Netherlands Government would then be able to yield without risking Parliamentary defeat, and they would find themselves able to fairly state that they had done the best they could, but were unable to continue their opposition to the whole of Europe.

M. Hartsen has requested me to make the foregoing explanation to your Lordship.

(The following is private.)

Should your Lordship approve of M. Hartsen's suggestion, would it not be essential to prevent the proposals of the Dutch Government from being at once rejected as unacceptable, and to induce all the Powers to reserve their final replies to them?

I presume, moreover, that some one Power must take the initiative in inviting the others to reserve those replies.

Would your Lordship object to a private request being made to you by the Dutch Government, to use your good offices to this effect?

I am convinced that M. Hartsen would be very pleased to see your Lordship intervene in this sense, and it would protect his Excellency from disagreeable pressure from other quarters.

It appears to me that the suggestion now put forward is probably the only way of escape, which the Dutch Government find open to them, out of the difficulty they are in; and I feel confident that they would feel much indebted to your Lordship for helping them to carry it out.

It is unnecessary for me to add that I have held out no hopes whatever in the matter.

No. 203.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir J. Kirk.

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 14, 1890.

YOUR acceptance of the principle of Sub-Committees referred to in your telegram No. 5 is authorized on the understanding that full reserve as to details is maintained.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 15.)

(No. 272. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 14, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a despatch, under flying seal, addressed to your Lordship by the British Delegates on the Technical Commission, reporting the proceedings at yesterday's meeting of the Commission.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 15.)

(No. 273. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 14, 1890.

AFTER yesterday's meeting of the Commission, which I attended, and at which the French Delegates stated that they were instructed on the ground of the sovereign rights of antonomy which the Conference had always respected, to claim that each group of territorial Powers in the Congo Basin should be allowed to frame their respective Tariffs for the East and West Coasts of Africa, within the Tariff limits fixed by the Conference, by agreement among themselves and without any obligation to submit the result of their labours to the Plenary Commission, the French Minister explained to me, privately, the real motives which he said had prompted his Government to make this demand, and which he was unable to state to the Commission.

According to M. Bourée, the serious complaints made by French commercial houses trading with the Congo State of the vexatious and exorbitant imports recently imposed by that Government on trade had determined his Government to demand a free hand in framing the Tariff for their territories in the Congo Basin in order to enable them so manipulate it as to force the Congo Government to modify these obnoxious taxes and export duties, and to keep the whip hard over them in future. He assured me that, to the best of his belief, his Government had no idea of introducing, directly or indirectly, differential treatment of goods, while they regarded the import duties themselves with utter indifference; but what they desired was to retain the power, not so much of increasing as of reducing the duties to a minimum, or even of levying no duties at all, should the Congo State maintain or attempt to re-enact at any future time its recent extravagant imports. Such a guarantee for the protection of French Commercial interests from arbitrary exactions would, he said, alone justify his Government in departing from what he admitted was their traditional policy of not taxing French products in French possessions or Colonies.

It is unnecessary for me to point out the opportunity that such uncontrolled power might give to France, by reason of her geographical position on the Upper Congo, of crippling the resources of the Congo State at will.

In reply to my remark that we were equally interested in the modification of the extravagant taxes and duties to which he referred, but that it was a question which the Commission was incompetent to discuss, and which must be settled outside it, M. Bourée said that my objection was well founded as applied to the whole Commission, but not as applied to the immediate neighbours of the Congo State, who might negotiate such a Tariff arrangement as he had sketched *inter se*—rather, as he put it, “de Cabinet à Cabinet,” without any outside interference, which the King would resent. This, he said, was the real “fond de son sac,” the knowledge of which might, he thought, throw a useful light on the attitude of his Government and of that of Portugal, whose Delegate had suggested that the maximum, but not the minimum Tariff duties leviable on each group of imports might be decided by the Commission; and in view of these motives and objects M. Bourée doubted if his Government could ever be brought to agree to the condition stipulated for by the British Delegates that the separate Tariffs must be submitted for the consideration and sanction of the Plenary Commission. He added that his Government would have no objection to Holland taking part in the negotiation “à trois” which they proposed.

Thanking M. Bourée for the side-light he had thrown on the attitude of his Government, I said that in my opinion the course thus proposed was not in accordance with the provisions of the Declaration of the Brussels Conference, which clearly had in view the

preparation of a Tariff or Tariffs by the Commission, while I doubted if Her Majesty's Government would be satisfied with any assurances against the differential treatment of goods short of the guarantee offered by the examination and sanction of the Tariff by the Plenary Commission, on which all interests were represented.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 206.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 15.)

(No. 274. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 14, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 278, Africa, of the 12th instant, I am informed by Baron Lambermont that it is the wish of the Netherlands Government that their alternative proposals for indemnifying the Congo State for the expenditure it must incur in carrying out the provisions of the General Act of the Brussels Conference, should be considered and dealt with by a Conference specially convoked *ad hoc*, as a means of satisfying their *amour-propre*, and at the same time of enabling them to justify their action before Parliament.

The Netherlands Government will not take the initiative in proposing this course of procedure, to which, however, the Belgian Government are prepared to agree, if the other Powers should see no objection thereto.

The Technical Commission is, of course, incompetent to deal with these proposals.

I inclose copies of letters from the Belgian Minister at the Hague, reporting the overtures made to him in the above sense by the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 206.

Baron d'Anethan to Baron Lambermont.

Cher Baron,

La Haye, le 12 Novembre, 1890.

LE Ministre des Affaires Étrangères m'a de nouveau entretenu sur la question du Congo. Son Excellence aurait désiré pouvoir signer un seul des deux Actes de la Conférence; mais cette proposition ne lui paraissant pas rencontrer l'approbation générale, M. Hartsen tiendrait au moins à ce que ces deux propositions (cotisation et alcools), fussent l'objet d'une délibération de la Conférence; il sait très bien quel sera le sort de ces enfants morts-nés; mais il trouverait dans cette concession une satisfaction d'amour-propre pour les Pays-Bas et il pourrait s'en prévaloir devant les États-Généraux pour justifier son adhésion aux deux Protocoles de la Conférence.

Le Ministre est très pressé d'en finir et il ajoute que rien ne serait plus facile que de satisfaire à ce désir, la plupart des Délégués à la Commission Spéciale ayant fait partie de la Conférence.

Le Ministre ne m'a plus parlé de la question de l'immutabilité des droits.

Agrérez, &c.
(Signé) Baron D'ANETHAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 206.

Baron d'Anethan to Baron Lambermont.

Cher Baron,

La Haye, le 13 Novembre, 1890.

M. HARTSEN m'a exprimé le désir de revenir sur notre entretien de hier. Il m'a bien prié de vous faire savoir qu'il ne prend aucune initiative au sujet d'une nouvelle réunion de la Conférence.

Il a, m'a-t-il dit, soumis, par l'intermédiaire de la Belgique, deux propositions aux Puissances; il attend la réponse.

Mais dans notre conversation d'hier il a admis, comme il le fait encore, qu'un examen de ses propositions par la Conférence serait le meilleur moyen de résoudre la question.

C'est le développement de mon télégramme de ce jour.

Agréer, &c.
(Signé) Baron D'ANETHAN.

No. 207.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 15.)

(No. 6.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 14, 1890.

At yesterday's meeting of the Congo Tariff Commission, the Turkish Minister took his seat as Delegate for the first time.

The President, after a few introductory remarks, asked the Delegates to state whether they were authorized by their respective Governments, to treat the eastern and western sides of the free zone apart, with a view to facilitate a settlement.

We replied by reading the annexed statement embodying the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch No. 2 of the 12th instant, and in the Board of Trade's letter of the same date referred to therein, and we maintained that effectual provision must be made to prevent the introduction of either direct or indirect differential treatment of goods, and that the Tariffs when elaborated should be submitted for the consideration and approval of the Plenary Commission.

The French Minister stated that he accepted the division of the area of the zone as proposed, and disavowed any intention on the part of his Government of introducing any differential treatment prohibited by the Act of Berlin, but he was not authorized to admit the condition insisted upon by the British Government that the Customs system to be applied to imports must come before the Commission for sanction.

M. Bourée demanded, in the name of his Government, the right to fix (always within the 10 per cent. maximum) its own Tariff, stating that any external interference with this prerogative would be regarded as an attack upon the sovereign rights of the State.

This autonomy, he said, was not likely to lead to any injurious inequality, since the mutual interests of adjoining States would, he thought, naturally lead them to frame, if not a common Tariff, at least a Tariff that would equalize the burden upon trade by taking into consideration local circumstances. (His Excellency referred as an illustration of his meaning to the geographical position of the French Congo, coterminous with the Colony of Gaboon, one within and the other without the conventional basin.)

To this doctrine, that a settlement by the Commission of the details of the Tariff would be an invasion of the sovereign rights of each State, we totally demurred, seeing that no right to levy import dues now exists within the free zone; so far, therefore, from curtailing any right, the course we insisted upon would have the effect of giving to the States concerned a power not now possessed, which could not be acquired without the consent of all the Powers Signatories of the Berlin Act.

Lord Vivian, after recalling the fact that the British Plenipotentiaries at the Conference had always stood out for a common Tariff, explained that Her Majesty's Government had at first desired to limit the import duties to the Independent States alone; that on learning that such a course would tend to defeat the very object in view (that of providing financial assistance to the Congo Government), by driving trade away from the Independent State, they had agreed to extend the right to levy import duties to the whole conventional basin, but they had always and consistently maintained that the principles embodied in the Berlin Act of equality of treatment of all goods, without distinction of origin, must be scrupulously observed.

He asked, therefore, whether the Commission clearly recognized that the above principles, viz., freedom of transit and the prohibition of all differential treatment, he distinctly maintained in elaborating the proposed Tariffs, adding that, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, the only adequate guarantee for the observance of these principles lay in the submission of the Tariffs to the Plenary Commission for examination and sanction in accordance with the clear intention of the Conference.

Count de Macedo, the Portuguese Minister, while consenting to the separate consideration of the Eastern and Western Tariffs, suggested as a compromise between the courses advocated by his British and French colleagues that the Plenary Commission

should specify the merchandize to be admitted free of duty into the conventional basin, and should fix the *maximum* rate for each class of goods to be subjected to import duty, each State being left free to *lower* the rate so fixed at will.

He said that differential duties, properly so called, were clearly forbidden; but he could not look upon it as an infraction of the Berlin Act for any nation to lower, at a sacrifice of its own revenue, a duty to which it was entitled, but which it chose to forego in favour of its own national products.

In saying this he renounced all intention on the part of his Government to make use of any such faculty.

This idea, we may remark, was not followed out nor discussed, but it will be seen that, setting aside for the moment all question of whether or no an indirect differential treatment might result, a most important practical question lies beneath it, viz., whether the Tariff we are about to fix is to be compulsory or optional. We can see that when this matter comes up for consideration, as it must in Commission, powerful arguments may be used on either side. While, on the one hand, the absolute freedom of each State to reduce its Tariff below a fixed maximum, in order to attract trade, would be disadvantageous to the merchant, it might, on the other hand, as indicated by Count Macedo, produce a form of indirect differential treatment, and might also, through commercial rivalry, defeat the very object for which the question of import duties was raised, viz., to find an adequate revenue for the Congo State.

The German Minister also agreed to the division of the zone, and supported us by insisting upon the Tariff being placed before the Commission for sanction.

The Italian Delegate, being without specific instruction, stated that he simply followed the action of Germany.

The President then said that the meeting seemed to be unanimously in favour of the division of the conventional basin of the Congo into an eastern and a western area for convenience of discussion, but pointed out the conflict of opinion that existed between Great Britain—supported by some of the other Powers—and France as to whether or not the Tariff was to be submitted to the Plenary Commission.

He therefore proposed that, following a course already adopted with success on more than one occasion in the Conference under circumstances somewhat similar, we should, after getting the necessary sanction of our Government, under every reserve, and leaving the question of whether or not special sanction of the Commission is or is not necessary, to discuss in two Sub-Committees, composed of the Powers territorially concerned, at which the other Delegates would have the right of being present, the Tariffs best suited to the eastern and western zones.

The President held that such a preliminary discussion, while binding the Powers to nothing, would in all probability result in a proposal of the system of tarification which all might accept, and so open the way to a solution of the present difficulty.

We and the other Delegates agreed to refer the matter, as desired, for the consideration of our respective Governments, but on the distinct understanding, expressly insisted on by ourselves and our French colleagues, that consenting to discuss the Tariff should in no way be held to imply a change in the position which we respectively maintained.

In order to give time for the Governments to consider and give instructions on this point, the Commission has been adjourned until Tuesday next, the 18th instant.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure in No. 207.

*Text of Declaration made by the British Delegates in the Technical Commission,
November 18, 1890.*

LE Gouvernement de la Reine a pris en considération la proposition faite, lors de la dernière séance de la Commission Technique d'après laquelle le projet de Tarif serait scindé en deux parties, dont l'une serait applicable aux territoires compris dans la partie orientale du bassin conventionnel du Congo et l'autre aux territoires compris dans la partie occidentale du même bassin, en tant que ces territoires sont visés par l'Acte de Berlin.

Ces deux Tarifs seraient élaborés dans les limites du 10 pour cent *ad valorem* par les Puissances territoriales directement intéressées, cette limite étant le taux maximum.

sanctionné par la Déclaration du 2 Juillet dernier, annexée à l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles.

Les Délégués Britanniques sont autorisés par le Gouvernement de la Reine à se rallier à cette proposition aux conditions suivantes :—

1. Qu'il serait nettement entendu que des mesures efficaces soient prises contre l'introduction, soit directement, soit indirectement de tout traitement différentiel. Sur ce rapport le Gouvernement de la Reine maintient que les privilèges consacrés dans l'Acte de Berlin ne sauraient être ni abandonnés ni affaiblis.

2. Le Gouvernement de la Reine est également d'avis qu'il est essentiel que les nouveaux Tarifs seraient soumis dans tous leurs détails à la considération et à la sanction de la Commission Plénière.

No. 208.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 64.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 15, 1890, 4.15 P.M.

THE following compromise has been, in confidence, suggested to Sir H. Rumbold by the Minister for Foreign Affairs for the Netherlands :—

[Here follows non-private part of Sir H. Rumbold's telegram : see No. 202.]

It is suggested by Sir H. Rumbold, privately, that Her Majesty's Government should take the first step, and launch the proposal.

The following reply has been sent :—

[See No. 209.]

No. 209.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 15, 1890, noon.

A SATISFACTORY solution seems to be offered by the course suggested in your telegram No. 7, and, if need be, I should be willing to propose and support it. But, on consideration, the Dutch Government will, I think, perhaps feel that the President of the Conference should rather propose and carry it through.

No. 210.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 16.)

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, November 16, 1890.

IN compliance with the instructions conveyed in your Lordship's despatch No. 2, and in the Board of Trade letter inclosed therein, we have the honour to report that at to-day's meeting of the Technical Commission we defined the conditions on which we were authorized by your Lordship to consider the question of separate Tariffs for the east and west zones of the conventional basin of the Congo.

The French Minister insisted that the autonomy of each State should remain intact, maintaining that the neighbouring States would inevitably work together ; and he declared that, according to his instructions, the French Government would refuse to submit the Tariff for the French possessions in the Congo Basin to the sanction of the Plenary Commission, as we had proposed.

The German, Italian, and Turkish Delegates supported our views.

The United States' Representative assured us of his concurrence therein, none of our colleagues openly supporting the French view.

The President suggested that this fundamental question might be left for further decision, and that Sub-Committees, composed respectively of the Delegates of the territorial Powers concerned, might be provisionally charged to discuss the separate Tariffs for

the east and west zones, and he expressed the hope that by this means the difficulties now existing may be overcome.

Does your Lordship sanction such a course, the questions of principle being fully reserved?

The Commission will not meet again before Tuesday, the 18th instant.

No. 211.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 17.)

(No. 52. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 14, 1890.

I SAW M. Hartsen yesterday on my return, and spoke to him in the sense of the instructions which your Lordship had confided to me on the subject of the Congo duties.

I said that there could be no question as to the agreement of the views of all the Powers in regard to this affair.

It was impossible, therefore, for one Government alone to continue to oppose their individual views to such a general consensus of opinion.

In persisting in their opposition, and thereby thwarting the decisions of the Anti-Slavery Conference, the Dutch Government would take upon themselves a very heavy responsibility, and I was again charged most earnestly to draw their attention to the invidious position they were making for themselves.

As had been so well pointed out by your Lordship in your speech at the Mansion House, there was scarcely an example of any country having entered into an International Agreement without having had to make some concession or other, and without having deferred to some extent to the views of others.

M. Hartsen, in reply to my remarks, assured me that he was most anxious to devise some means of meeting the views of the other Powers.

He had, he thought, given proof of this in the counter-proposals which he had submitted to the Powers.

I observed that I was afraid there was but little chance of their being accepted.

That, said M. Hartsen, was another question. The important point, however, was that this Government could not now be charged with confining themselves to a base *non possumus*. In making their proposals they had given clear proof of their sincere desire to find some solution of the difficulty.

His Excellency then proceeded to explain that what he of course desired most was that some exit should be contrived out of the difficulty. He thought that his counter-proposals might afford such an exit. Why should it not be arranged that, after the close of the labours of the Tariff Commission, the Powers should charge their Representatives at Brussels to meet for the purpose of examining the Dutch proposals? This could be done in a very short space of time, and if those proposals were rejected—M. Hartsen was evidently quite prepared for such a result—the effect of their having been formally taken into consideration would be to satisfy public opinion in this country that the Government had done their best and could not carry their opposition further without the danger of impairing their good relations with the Powers. It would then be possible for them to give up their opposition without exposing themselves to serious consequences here (by which no doubt M. Hartsen meant a Parliamentary defeat and loss of office), and they might fairly state that they had done their best short of defying the whole of Europe, which, of course, added M. Hartsen, they could never think of doing.

Public opinion was greatly excited on this affair, and he could affirm that, if he had not acted as he had done, and had at once given way upon it, he would have risked being stoned in the streets.

His Excellency requested me to lay all this before your Lordship with renewed assurances of his sincere desire to contribute to a satisfactory termination of this affair.

In the course of our conversation I hinted at the possibility of some unpleasant pressure being brought to bear upon this Government, and said that I felt sure that your Lordship would regret their exposing themselves to it.

M. Hartsen at once said that he knew well from what quarter such pressure might come. It would be from Germany, and he should be very glad to avoid it.

have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 17.)

(No. 275. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 15, 1890.

THE French Delegates have received up to now no indication of any intention on the part of their Government to modify their demand that the group of territorial Powers in the Congo Basin proper should be allowed to negotiate their own Tariff arrangements within the maximum limit laid down in the Declaration of the Brussels Conference among themselves—"de Cabinet à Cabinet"—without any interference on the part of non-territorial Powers, or any obligation to submit the result of their negotiations to the Plenary Commission for approval; and they evidently do not expect that their Government will give way on this point. They maintain, in opposition to the view held, I believe, by every other member of the Commission, that this was the intention of the Conference; and they do not admit that the provision in the Declaration which prescribes that the Commission shall "*arrêter dans la limite maxima de 10 pour cent de la valeur, les conditions du régime douanier à instituer dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo,*" implies that the Tariff or Tariffs must be elaborated or sanctioned by the Commission. I have pointed out to the Commission that the terms of the Declaration made by the British Plenipotentiaries, under your Lordship's instructions, on the 2nd July, prove that one of the conditions we attached to our signature of the Acts of the Conference was that the "*conditions of the Tariff must be fixed by a negotiation to be opened immediately after the signature of the General Act,*" and that the whole tenor of the Protocols tends to show that this was the intention of the Conference; and though it is true that the French Plenipotentiary upheld in Conference the rights of each Sovereign State to fiscal autonomy within the maximum Tariff limits, even he admitted that "*dès le jour de l'achèvement des travaux de la Commission on pourrait tenir pour définitivement réglée la tarification de tous les articles sur lesquels on se serait mis d'accord, et rendre le Tarif de 10 pour cent provisoirement applicable aux autres, jusqu'à ce que l'entente complète ne soit établie.*" It seems to me that this clearly implies the detailed examination of the Tariff by the Commission.

Moreover, the question has been plainly put to M. Bourée, without eliciting any satisfactory answer: if the Commission is not to have the right of examining and sanctioning the Tariff or Tariffs, for what object has it been convoked, and why have non-territorial Powers been needlessly put to the trouble of sending Delegates to it?

It is the general opinion that the pretension of the French Government is quite untenable, and it appears to me that its attitude is very suspicious, and as if there was something behind it.

M. Bourée declared to me last night that France had no selfish views, and that he thought it was strongly in our interest to support the proposal of his Government, inasmuch as it would be very advantageous to our commerce with the Congo State that power should be retained by France, in the general interests of trade, to check the arbitrary exactions by which it was threatened at the hands of that State. I said that I thought this control might be better secured by obtaining a right of revising the Tariff at the demand of one of the interested Powers. He demurred to the difficulty of convoking the Commission each time that such a revision might be necessary.

I inclose copy of a Memorandum by Sir John Kirk on the possible results of allowing the fiscal autonomy claimed by France.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

P.S.—Baron Lambermont tells me in confidence that, under great pressure, he has persuaded the King to allow him to give, at the next meeting of the Commission, a confirmation in writing of his verbal assurance of his intention to modify the recent taxes and export duties enacted by the Congo State which have provoked such serious complaints; but that His Majesty positively refuses to take any pledge for the future, holding that such an engagement would be inconsistent with his independent rights.

I gather that the proposed reduction of the export duties on ivory will amount to about one-fourth of the present duty.

V.

Inclosure in No. 212.

Memorandum.

IN judging the action of France on the present occasion, and in order to understand the result of the fiscal autonomy she maintains, we must keep in view the exceptional position she holds on the Upper Congo, where France shares with the Free Congo State an inland province with many hundred miles of navigable river common to both.

It is easy to see that if France were to secure the right of altering her import Tariff from time to time as she pleases, she would be able, owing to the operation of the free transit Clause of the Berlin Act, to pass goods in transit by rail through the Congo State territory free of all duty, and to land them anywhere on the French bank of the Congo or Dabangi Rivers.

By manipulating her inland Tariff, France could thus seriously affect the revenue of the Free Congo State, thus defeating the object the Powers have in view, or obtain advantages for herself as the price of a common action.

No other Power but France holds a similar position in this respect, she being the only one that shares with the Free Congo State sovereign rights on the navigable river and its tributaries above the rapids.

(Signed) JOHN KIRK.

Brussels, November 16, 1890.

No. 213.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 17.)

(No. 277. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 16, 1890.

I PRIVATELY communicated last night to Baron Lambermont the purport of your Lordship's telegram No. 64 of yesterday, recording the suggestion made by the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs for solving the difficulty created by the refusal of that Government to sanction the establishment of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo, and your Lordship's amendment to it.

Baron Lambermont asked for time to consider the proposal and to consult the King on it. He informs me to-day that your Lordship's suggestion that the plan of the Dutch Government should be proposed and carried through by the President of the Conference is entirely concurred in here, and he is prepared, as President, to give effect to it at the proper moment on hearing that the Netherlands Government have no objection to this procedure. He points out, however, that it will be necessary for the Powers to extend the mandate of the Commission or to give special powers to their Representatives here to enable either one or the other to deal with the Dutch counter-proposals.

In view of the suspicious attitude of the French Government, I venture to suggest that in the event of such a Conference (for it would amount to one) being called together, the greatest care should be taken to limit its functions absolutely to the consideration of the Dutch proposals, and not to leave a loop-hole for reopening any question that was settled in the last Conference.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 214.

M. Hartsen to Count Bylandt.—(Communicated to the Marquis of Salisbury by Count Bylandt, November 17.)

(Traduction.)

La Haye, le 16 Novembre, 1890.

HIER soir j'ai reçu le télégramme de votre Excellence conçu dans les termes suivants :—

“Est-il vrai que votre Excellence aurait dit au Ministre d'Angleterre que, si après sérieux examen de nos propositions par Conférence de Bruxelles, elles seraient rejetées, le Gouvernement du Roi pourrait prendre en considération l'adoption du principe des droits d'entrée Congo ? Lettre suivra demain.”

Je me suis empressé d'y répondre: "C'est inexact. Maintenons position intacte, mais avons approuvé examen des propositions par Conférence," ce que j'ai l'honneur de confirmer par la présente.

En même temps j'ai écrit une lettre particulière au Ministre d'Angleterre pour lui expliquer qu'il avait fait erreur; et que ce que j'avais dit était, qu'il ne m'était pas possible de signer la Déclaration, même si je le voulais—tant que je n'avais pas reçu de réponse à nos propositions, ou bien tant que ces propositions n'auraient pas été discutées dans une Conférence *ad hoc*, mais qu'il ne s'ensuivait nullement que nous cédions en cas du rejet de nos propositions.

Je prie votre Excellence de vouloir bien, pour autant qu'il soit nécessaire, éclaircir le Gouvernement Britannique au sujet du malentendu qui a eu lieu, et saisir, &c.

(Signé) HARTSEN.

No. 215.

Count de Bylandt to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 17.)

M. le Marquis,

Londres, le 17 Novembre, 1890.

J'AI l'honneur de transmettre ci-joint à votre Seigneurie un Mémoire de mon Gouvernement, au sujet de son attitude à la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles, et concernant les récentes propositions qu'il a faites aux Puissances.

En priant votre Seigneurie de vouloir bien prendre connaissance de l'annexe de la présente, au contenu de laquelle j'ai l'honneur de me référer, je m'empresse de vous réitérer, &c.

(Signé) C. DE BYLANDT.

Inclosure in No. 215.

Memorandum.

DANS la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles, le Délégué des Pays-Bas a été empêché de signer l'Acte Général de la Conférence, le Baron Gericke n'ayant pas reçu de son Gouvernement l'autorisation de signer en même temps une Déclaration accordant en principe la faculté de prélever des droits d'entrée dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo.

Les inconvénients des droits d'entrée ont été expliqués trop souvent pour qu'il soit nécessaire d'y revenir.

En attendant la situation s'est modifiée; le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas s'est permis de faire des propositions qui, en maintenant l'Acte de Berlin, préviennent les inconvénients de l'introduction des droits d'entrée.

Tout en constatant que le Gouvernement Néerlandais a toujours été prêt, et l'est encore, à signer l'Acte Général sans la Déclaration y annexée, il se permet d'appeler de nouveau l'attention des Puissances sur les propositions qu'il leur a soumises à l'effet de fournir à l'État Indépendant du Congo les ressources dont il a besoin, et il sollicite qu'une Conférence *ad hoc* soit convoquée, dans le but de prendre en considération ces propositions, ou toute autre proposition tendant à trouver une solution qui permette de laisser intacte l'Article IV de l'Acte de Berlin.

No. 216.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.**

(No. 65.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 17, 1890.

AFTER telegraphic communication with the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Bylandt has informed me that in the event of a Conference being convened *ad hoc* to consider their alternative propositions, they would not give any undertaking that they would give way respecting import duties if those propositions were rejected.

It is evident that in view of this statement great caution must be exercised in accepting the proposal that the Conference should reassemble.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 18.)

(No. 278. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 17, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT has just handed to me the accompanying *note verbale*, which has been officially communicated to the Belgian Government by the Netherlands Minister here, proposing, with a view to provide the resources required by the Congo State to carry out the engagements contracted under the General Act of the Brussels Conference, that a Conference *ad hoc* should be convoked to take into consideration the counter-proposals put forward with this object by the Netherlands Government, or any other proposals by which a solution of this question might be found which would not infringe Article IV of the General Act of Berlin.

Baron Lambertmont remarked that, as this note had probably been communicated to all the Signatory Powers, the Netherlands Government had evidently taken the initiative in making this proposal; that no date was specified for the convocation of the Conference; and that it was to be empowered to consider other proposals than those recently put forward by the Netherlands Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 217.

Note Verbale.

DANS la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles le Délégué des Pays-Bas a été empêché de signer l'Acte Général de la Conférence, le Baron Gericke n'ayant pas reçu de son Gouvernement l'autorisation de signer en même temps une Déclaration accordant en principe la faculté de prélever des droits d'entrée dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo.

Les inconvénients des droits d'entrée ont été expliqués trop souvent pour qu'il soit nécessaire d'y revenir.

En attendant, la situation a été modifiée; le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas s'est permis de faire des propositions qui, en maintenant l'Acte de Berlin, préviennent les inconvénients de l'introduction des droits d'entrée.

Tout en constatant que le Gouvernement Néerlandais a toujours été prêt, et l'est encore, à signer l'Acte Général sans la Déclaration y annexée, il se permet d'appeler de nouveau l'attention des Puissances sur les propositions qu'il leur a soumises à l'effet de fournir à l'État Indépendant du Congo les ressources dont il a besoin, et il sollicite qu'une Conférence *ad hoc* soit convoquée dans le but de prendre en considération ces propositions ou toute autre proposition tendant à trouver une solution qui permette de laisser intact l'Article IV de l'Acte de Berlin.

No. 218.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 18.)

(No. 6.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, November 18, 1890.

WE have the honour to report that at to-day's meeting of the Congo Tariffs Commission the British, German, and Italian Delegates declared that they were ready to take part in the Eastern Sub-Commission, but that they would decline to submit a Report of their proceedings to the Plenary Commission until the principle was accepted that the final sanction of details rests with that body.

M. Bourée, the French Delegate, stated that, in view of the absolute instructions he had received from Paris, he could not take part in even the conditional appointment of the Eastern Sub-Commission, but eventually agreed to refer the matter again to the French Government.

As far as regards the western zone of the conventional basin of the Congo, the French Government demand that the Tariff arrangements should be elaborated, not by the

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 18.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

The Hague, November 18, 1890.

I BEG to acknowledge the telegram which your Lordship dispatched to me yesterday. I am now writing for this evening's post a detailed explanation of the change of front adopted by M. Hartzen in regard to the action of the Dutch Government in the matter of the Conference *ad hoc* to examine their proposals. I have no hesitation in saying that he led me, and others of the foreign Representatives here, to believe that he intended to take advantage of that Conference to surrender to the decision of the Powers.

Technical Commission, but by direct negotiations "de Cabinet à Cabinet" between the three Congo Governments.

The Commission were unanimous in supporting the view upheld by us.

No. 219.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 19.)

(No. 54. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 17, 1890.

I HAD another interview with M. Hartsen on Saturday afternoon on the subject of the Congo duties.

In thinking over the conversation reported in my despatch No. 52, Confidential, Africa, of the 14th instant, it had appeared to me that there was some danger of the Conference *ad hoc*—to which M. Hartsen looked, as he himself expressed it, as an exit ("porte de sortie") out of his difficulty—being frustrated by unfavourable replies reaching the Dutch Government on the subject of their counter-proposals before that Conference should have been agreed to and called together.

Having in the interval had the honour to receive your Lordship's telegram of the 15th, expressing approval of the proposed solution, and stating that, while ready to contribute to its adoption, you were of opinion that it had better be mooted through the President of the Conference, I had an additional motive for seeking out his Excellency.

I began by stating to him that your Lordship thought that the scheme he had unfolded to me, and which I had communicated to you confidentially, afforded a good mode of putting an end to the difficulty in which the Dutch Government found themselves placed.

I did not tell his Excellency that you would be willing to support it if need be, the inquiry as to whether you would be disposed to do so having, as your Lordship will see by a reference to my telegram of the 14th instant, been made privately as from myself. I told M. Hartsen, however, that, in your opinion, the proposal for the Conference ought properly to come through the President of the Conference.

I then expressed to his Excellency my fears lest the premature receipt by him of individual replies from the Powers, unfavourable (as I feared they would be found to be) to his proposals, should in some sense mar the project of a Conference *ad hoc* by depriving it of the character of a serious examination of those proposals which, as he had explained to me, would be indispensable for satisfying public opinion in this country that the Government had carried its opposition to the Congo duties as far as it reasonably could.

As to this point his Excellency was good enough to remind me that as the Dutch alternative proposals had been communicated to the Powers through the Belgian Government, the replies would probably be sent through the same channel, when it would be possible, if necessary, to keep them back. The only replies which had reached him as yet—his Excellency referred to one from the Swedish Government—were to the effect that the Dutch proposals would be taken into consideration.

His Excellency then proceeded to speak of the period at which he thought the Conference *ad hoc* might meet. He said that it seemed to him that it would be better it should meet before the Technical Commission had concluded its labours.

I observed here that I had understood from him that he thought the proper time would be after the termination of that Commission.

His Excellency admitted that he had expressed such a view, but he was now of opinion that it would be better the Conference should meet while the Commission was still in session, as otherwise it (the Conference) would find itself in presence of a *fait accompli*, which might be awkward.

M. Hartsen then asked me to recommend this mode of proceeding to your Lordship, and to say that he hoped you would see your way to saying a word at Brussels in favour of the proposed Conference.

Before leaving his Excellency, I asked him how, assuming that the Conference should meet and reject his proposals, he would prepare public opinion here for his giving up his present opposition.

To this he replied that he would make use of the excellent arguments furnished by your Lordship as to the principle of mutual concession, without which no international agreement of an important character could possibly be concluded. At the same time he again dwelt on the strong feeling that existed here with regard to the whole question of

the Congo, and repeated his conviction that he would have been ignominiously driven from office if he had not made a determined stand on the subject.

I would add that, in exchanging views with several of my colleagues here, I find that M. Hartsen held to them exactly the same language as to myself, and that they all consider that he is prepared to yield on the main point if only he can obtain the *pro forma* satisfaction of seeing his proposals discussed in a Conference assembled expressly for that purpose.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 220.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 360.)

Foreign Office, November 19, 1890.

[Transmits copies of Sir H. Rumbold's Nos. 52 and 56 of November 14 and 18, 1890: *ante*, Nos. 211 and 223.]

No. 221.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 283.)

Foreign Office, November 19, 1890.

[Transmits copies of Sir H. Rumbold's Nos. 52, 54, 55, and 56 of November 14, 17, and 18, 1890: *ante*, Nos. 211, 219, 222, and 223.]

No. 222.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 20.)

(No. 55. Africa. Most Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 18, 1890.

ON Sunday afternoon I received from M. Hartsen the letter of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, and was not a little surprised at its contents. The letter purports to give an account of what passed at the two interviews I had had with his Excellency, its object being to prevent any misunderstanding on the subject. Independently of the complete change of front which it indicates, its statements call for the following observations.

M. Hartsen is not quite correct in stating that I insisted on his at once proceeding to sign the Acts of the Brussels Conference, although in accordance with my instructions, I did endeavour to impress upon him the impolicy and risk of persisting much longer in the line he had taken in opposition to the unanimous opinion of the rest of the Powers. I may likewise remark that M. Hartsen, in speaking of his "approval of the idea" of his proposals being discussed by a Conference *ad hoc*, entirely ignores the fact that he himself mooted that idea, and made it an urgent request to me to secure your Lordship's support for it. The most important part of his letter is, however, of course that where he informs me that it is well understood that the Dutch Government reserve all their liberty of action, whatever may be the fate of their proposals, and maintain the position which they have taken up till now in the Congo question.

The Belgian Minister calling upon me in the course of the afternoon, I showed him M. Hartsen's letter in confidence, and he was equally struck with me at the complete change of attitude, or backing-out, which it revealed. M. Hartsen having held to Baron d'Anethan, as well as to the Italian and German Ministers, language identical with that which he had used with me, we were driven to conclude that he had been talked over by some other member of the Cabinet opposed to the Congo duties, and had found it necessary to give up his conciliatory professions.

Before reporting to your Lordship these symptoms of a complete change in the situation, I felt of course bound to ascertain from M. Hartsen himself what could have led to it, and accordingly called yesterday morning at the Foreign Office, where I was informed that his Excellency was away at Amsterdam for the day. Late yesterday evening I

received a second letter from M. Hartsen, of which I likewise have the honour to inclose a copy, which surprised me still more, inasmuch as it insinuated that I had incorrectly reported to your Lordship what had passed between us, and that he had been obliged to set you right on the subject.

I think your Lordship will agree with me that the embarrassed tone and apologetic language of this curious letter show that the writer was in some difficulty when penning it.

As M. Hartsen hinted, however, that he might be unable to see me for some days, and I felt it absolutely necessary to talk the matter over with him, I sent him the accompanying letter arranging for an interview this morning.

I began by telling his Excellency that I thought I had some fair ground of complaint at his having thought it necessary to instruct Count Bylandt to correct the reports I had sent to your Lordship respecting our conversations.

I had brought with me the despatch I had addressed to your Lordship (No. 52), and was quite ready to read it out to him. I accordingly did so, without his being able to point to any inaccuracy in the report it contained. In the same way I detailed to him from memory what had passed at our second interview; and I then said that I must confess to him that I should be wanting in what I felt due to myself as a man of honour and a diplomatist desirous to perform his duties scrupulously, were I to conceal from him that he had conveyed to me the full impression that he had made up his mind to give in on the Congo duties, if only he could obtain the satisfaction of seeing his alternative proposals discussed in a Conference called expressly for that purpose. I added that the same impression had likewise been produced on my colleagues, and that I therefore regretted to say that the communications he had since addressed to me constituted a complete "reculade;" and, in my opinion, put an end to all chance, not only of a solution of the difficulty, but even of the meeting of the Conference to which he attached so much importance. It was evident, I thought, that, with the uncompromising reserves he had now formulated, there would be little chance of the Powers agreeing to the Conference.

M. Hartsen, who, during the first part of our interview, showed considerable embarrassment, assured me that I must not suppose that he intended making a "reculade." All he meant to convey was, that he could not bind himself beforehand to accept the Congo duties; and the misunderstanding between us, he added, simply referred to a question of "nuance." I said that I regretted to have to demur to this, and to be obliged to repeat that I had fully understood, and had reported accordingly, that he was quite prepared under given circumstances to give in.

M. Hartsen was very profuse in his assurances of the value he attached to the very friendly relations between us, and was good enough to say that he much appreciated my good offices ("bons procédés") in this affair. Our interview was altogether of a very friendly character, although I am bound to confess that I think the conduct of the Minister for Foreign Affairs in this question seems to me fairly open to criticism, and has shown, to say the least, very little consistency.

Before leaving him, his Excellency gave me a copy of a note which he had just addressed to the Powers, and in which he said that he proposed the convening of a Conference *ad hoc* without attaching any reserves to it. It seems to me that the concluding passage of this note leaves matters just as they were, inasmuch as it distinctly makes it the object of the Conference to find a solution that should allow of Article IV of the Treaty of Berlin being left intact.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

P.S.—I ought to mention that the unexpected difficulties that have arisen in the Technical Commission at Brussels certainly contribute to make the Dutch pause before giving in.

H. R.

Inclosure 1 in No. 222.

M. Hartsen to Sir H. Rumbold.

M. le Ministre,

La Haye, le 16 Novembre, 1890.

C'EST dans le but de rendre impossible tout malentendu que je me permets de résumer nos dernières conversations par rapport au Congo.

Lorsque le de ce mois vous avez insisté auprès de moi pour que le Gouvernement du Roi donnât sa signature aux Actes de Bruxelles, je me suis permis de vous

[809]

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répondre que le délai accordé n'était pas encore expiré et que de plus le Gouvernement du Roi, même s'il le voudrait, ne saurait procéder à la signature de ces Actes parce qu'il a fait aux Puissances Signataires des propositions auxquelles il attend la réponse et que le résultat auquel tâche de parvenir la Commission Technique à Bruxelles n'est pas encore connu.

J'ai eu l'honneur de vous dire que je ne saurais qu'approuver l'idée de faire discuter et débattre les propositions qu'a faites le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas dans une Conférence *ad hoc* dans laquelle pourraient se traiter également toutes autres propositions tendant à parvenir à une solution de la question du Congo.

Tout en résumant ce qui précède je me permets d'ajouter qu'il est entendu que le Gouvernement du Roi se réserve toute sa liberté d'action, quelque soit le sort de ses propositions et qu'il maintient la position qu'il a prise jusqu'aujourd'hui dans la question du Congo.

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) HARTSEN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 222.

M. Hartsen to Sir H. Rumbold.

M. le Ministre,

La Haye, le 17 Novembre, 1890.

IL m'a fallu me rendre à Amsterdam aujourd'hui, où j'ai trouvé les esprits accablés sous les désastres financiers qui ont eu lieu, et dont moi-même je suis très impressionné.

Cette courte absence a été la cause que je n'étais pas au Ministère quand vous avez bien voulu y passer; je l'ai d'autant plus regretté qu'il y a eu évidemment entre nous un malentendu par rapport à l'interprétation de notre dernière conversation. Dès que je m'en suis aperçu j'ai fait le nécessaire pour faire expliquer ce malentendu à Londres, mais je désire vous en exprimer tous mes regrets; la chose doit vous être personnellement désagréable comme elle ne laisse pas de m'être pénible; j'ai eu l'avantage d'apprécier vos bons procédés et je regrette infiniment cet incident.

Je crois inutile de revenir sur les détails qui ont été expliqués à Lord Salisbury, mais je veux vous dire que si peut-être j'ai commis la faute de ne pas m'être expliqué assez clairement, j'en éprouve des regrets, et je ne me fais aucun scrupule de vous les exprimer.

Je me permets de vous adresser ces lignes parce que d'ici à Jeudi je serai tellement engagé, que l'occasion de nous rencontrer manquera peut-être et que je ne veux pas vous laisser sans un mot de ma part.

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) HARTSEN.

Inclosure 3 in No. 222.

Sir H. Rumbold to M. Hartsen.

M. le Ministre,

La Haye, Lundi soir, le 17 Novembre, 1890.

JE reçois à l'instant la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'adresser aujourd'hui. Ainsi que dans votre lettre précédente, en date d'hier, vous voulez bien faire allusion à un malentendu qu'il y aurait eu entre nous. Je dois vous avouer que je cherche en vain quel pourrait être ce malentendu.

Je crois avoir très exactement recueilli le sens de ce que vous m'avez dit au cours de nos deux entretiens de Jeudi et de Samedi dernier, bien qu'il soit certain que votre lettre d'hier avait produit sur moi l'impression de n'être pas tout à fait d'accord avec ce que vous m'aviez fait l'honneur de m'exposer la veille. C'est dans le but d'éclaircir cette divergence que je suis passé au Ministère ce matin.

Vous comprendrez, j'en suis sûr, qu'en vue de ce que vous me dites d'explications que vous avez cru devoir transmettre à Londres au sujet d'une fausse interprétation donnée par moi à vos paroles, il est tout à fait indispensable que j'aie avec vous un entretien. J'aurai donc l'honneur de me rendre demain matin, vers 11 heures, au Ministère, dans l'espoir de vous y rencontrer.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) HORACE RUMBOLD

Inclosure 4 in No. 222.

Note addressed by M. Hartsen to the Powers.

DANS la Conférence Antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles, le Délégué des Pays-Bas a été empêché de signer l'Acte Général de la Conférence, le Baron Gericke n'ayant pas reçu de son Gouvernement l'autorisation de signer en même temps une Déclaration accordant en principe la faculté de prélever des droits d'entrée dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo.

Les inconvénients des droits d'entrée ont été expliqués trop souvent pour qu'il soit nécessaire d'y revenir.

En attendant la situation a été modifiée: le Gouvernement des Pays-Bas s'est permis de faire des propositions qui, en maintenant l'Acte de Berlin, préviennent les inconvénients de l'introduction des droits d'entrée.

Tout en constatant que le Gouvernement Néerlandais a toujours été prêt et l'est encore à signer l'Acte Général sans la Déclaration y annexée, il se permet d'appeler de nouveau l'attention des Puissances sur les propositions qu'il leur a soumises à l'effet de fournir à l'État Indépendant du Congo les ressources dont il a besoin, et il sollicite qu'une Conférence *ad hoc* soit convoquée dans le but de prendre en considération ces propositions, ou toute autre proposition tendant à trouver une solution qui permette de laisser intact l'Article IV de l'Acte de Berlin.

No. 223.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 20.)

(No. 56. Africa. Secret.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 18, 1890.

BARON D'ANETHAN told me, in the strictest confidence, to-day, that the German Minister had begged him to be careful not to mention him as being favourable to the idea of a Conference *ad hoc* to discuss the Dutch proposals. Although he himself was in favour of not pressing the Dutch Government too hard, he should be sorry that his own Government thought that he was thus inclined, for, as far as he knew, they were fully determined to oblige Holland to give in unconditionally, and he did not know what measures they might have in store for that purpose.

In this connection I may also mention that I am assured that the Dutch Government recently made an appeal at Berlin to be allowed, at least, to sign the Brussels Anti-Slavery Act, but that they were told, in reply, that they must sign both the Act and the Declaration, or neither.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 224.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 20.)

(No. 57. Africa. Very Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 19, 1890.

THE German Minister told me this morning that on the occasion of a dinner he had given a fortnight ago in honour of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, he had had some very serious talk with his Excellency on the Congo duties, and had pressed him hard to give up his opposition to them.

M. Hartsen, when driven into a corner, had admitted that all he asked for was that a door should be left open to him, and when asked what he meant by this, had then suggested, in terms almost identical with those he used to me, that a Conference to discuss the Dutch proposals would afford the needful solution. He would then, he had added, whatever might be the fate of his proposals, find himself in a position to give in and sign the Declaration. Baron Saurma had forthwith reported this conversation to his Government, but had the next day received a private note from M. Hartsen, asking him to call at the Foreign Office, as he wished to have some further talk with him. M. Hartsen had then said that he was afraid there might have been some misunderstanding with regard to what

had passed the evening before. The fact was that he had been far from well, and might not have made himself quite clear. He then withdrew from what he had said with regard to his readiness to give way, and confined himself to asking the German Minister to recommend to his Government that the Dutch Government should be allowed to sign the Anti-Slavery Act. By doing so, he argued, they would be in every way committed to contribute to procuring the necessary resources for the Congo State.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 225.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 20.)

(No. 279. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 19, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to forward two despatches addressed, under flying seal, to your Lordship, by the British Delegates on the Congo Tariff Commission, reporting the proceedings at yesterday's meeting at the Plenary Commission, and of an informal meeting held this morning to discuss the basis of a common Tariff for the eastern zone.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 226.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 20.)*

(No. 8.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 19, 1890.

WE inclose a Memorandum of what took place at the meeting of the Commission held yesterday, an abstract of which we telegraphed to your Lordship.

We informed the Commission that we were in a position to take part in discussing the question of import duties applicable to the eastern side of the conventional basin of Congo, provided that all matters of detail affecting both coasts were eventually to be submitted to the General Commission.

In reply to an interpellation by the French Minister, we explained that no report would be submitted to the full Commission, until this principle had been accepted and applied to both sections of the zone.

We were fully supported in this by the Representatives of Germany, Italy, and the United States of America.

The French Minister in reply said that he held the most positive instructions to admit nothing that could imply the consent of France to allow the Tariff applicable to her possessions on the West Coast within the Congo Basin being brought before the Commission in any form. On this his present instructions were absolute. He, therefore, could not be a consenting party to the appointment of a Sub-Commission to discuss the affairs of the eastern zone, if that were to apply an admission of the right of the Commission to discuss the Tariff of the three Congo States in the west. He was directed to insist upon absolute independence, it being left to the three States territorially interested to come to an agreement with each other, "de Cabinet à Cabinet." Further, he admitted that France had no objection to the Tariff proposed in itself, that the income therefrom was of no moment to her, and could have no effect upon trade, but that what she had in view was to be able to bring pressure to bear upon the Congo State when she pleased.

He told the Commission that the views of France had somewhat changed since the Conference closed in July; that recent acts of the Congo State had been severely criticised both in the French press and in Parliament, and that the right to modify her own Tariff at will was necessary to France, in order to enable her to control the doings of the Congo State.

Such questions, he said, could not be discussed in Commission; it was therefore necessary that a settlement should be arrived at between those Powers interested.

As the members of the Commission were unanimous in favour of the position we had maintained, the French Minister agreed to ask his Government whether they would consent to the appointment of an Eastern Sub-Commission to act under the reserves we had insisted upon.

The Dutch Minister, who was present, took no part in the discussion, his instructions being that he is to attend as a spectator only, in order that he may report; but one could see marks of evident satisfaction at the support he was receiving from France.

We may observe that the free action, such as France demands, would, if accorded, leave her mistress, to a large extent, over the financial affairs of the Congo State.

Her ostensible object is to gain a power which she intends to use to force the Congo State to withdraw certain fiscal laws outside the competency of the Commission to discuss, but which give rise to complaint in France.

No other State, it will be observed, not even Portugal, can share with France this power, for France alone has possessions on the Upper navigable Congo, and its tributaries to which goods will be sent free of duty, and in transit when the railway, now in process of construction, is completed.

If, therefore, each one of the three Congo States were to remain free, and if the Tariff in its details is not submitted, as we and all the Powers interested would wish, to the decision of the Commission, the Congo State could not derive the financial help, which it is the avowed object of the Powers to give, without the consent of France.

Under these circumstances, together with the other Delegates, we have been desired by the President to ask our Government what reply they wish to give to the French proposal, which now has assumed a substantive form, namely, to grant perfect freedom within the 10 per cent. limit to each one of the three Congo States, leaving them, as between each other, to come to any arrangement they please, "de Cabinet à Cabinet," outside the Commission.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure in No. 226.

Memorandum of Proceedings at the Technical Commission, November 18, 1890.

[N.B.—Those parts of the discussion dealt with in the despatch, to which this Memorandum is an inclosure, have been here omitted.]

THE President having invited the members to state what instructions they had received since the last meeting, we made the following declaration:—

"Nous avons déjà déclaré lors de la dernière séance de la Commission que nous sommes autorisés à nous rallier à la proposition de faire scinder le bassin conventionnel du Congo en deux zones.

"Nous sommes maintenant à même de déclarer que nous sommes autorisés à agréer, en principe, la nomination des deux Sous-Comités, sous les mêmes réserves quant aux détails, que nous avons déjà eu l'honneur d'exposer à la Commission.

"Nous sommes ainsi tout prêts, dès aujourd'hui, à prendre part aux travaux du Sous-Comité chargé d'élaborer le Tarif pour la Côte Orientale, tout en maintenant nos réserves quant à la question de principe."

The German and Italian Delegates stated that they were also prepared to join in the Sub-Commission, and that any other Delegates who cared to attend would be welcomed at the sittings.

M. Bourée, the French Representative, having inquired whether the nomination of the Oriental Sub-Commission implied a similar course of proceeding on the West Coast, we stated that in accepting the proposal to take part in the Eastern Sub-Commission, we desired that it should be distinctly understood that, in our opinion, no Report should be drawn up, until the Powers interested on the West Coast should also have consented to submit their Tariff or Tariffs to the Plenary Commission.

M. Bourée then repeated the statement made at the last meeting, using the arguments referred to in our covering despatch.

In reply to an inquiry addressed by Lord Vivian to the United States' Delegate, as the Representative of a non-territorial nation interested in the Congo trade, Mr. Terrell said that his one object in attending the Commission was to help in the elaboration of a simple, uniform, and fair Tariff; that he was in favour of common Tariffs for the eastern and western zones; and that, convinced that the best way to attain this object would be the appointment of two Sub-Commissions, whose recommendations should be submitted to the Plenary Commission, he cordially supported our views.

The Austrian Delegate, Count Khevenhüller, inquired whether his colleagues considered that the Sub-Commissions derived their authority to meet and discuss from the Plenary Commission, or not; he declined to take cognizance of them.

Sir John Kirk having replied that the Sub-Commissioners' powers were necessarily derived from the Plenary Commission, M. Bourée declared that he was not authorized to delegate to others a power which he did not possess himself.

In reply to an inquiry by M. Bourée as to what objection could be raised to this commercial autonomy claimed by France, Lord Vivian recalled the fact that the British Plenipotentiaries had during the Conference consistently upheld the competency of the Technical Commission to settle the Tariff system for the Congo Basin; and he quoted remarks made by M. Bourée in Conference on the 23rd and 28th June last, where he said:—

*"Le mandat de la Commission se bornera aux tarifications."** And *"... Quant à la Commission, elle ne sera autre chose qu'une Commission de Dégrèvement."*†

"Dès le jour de l'achèvement de ces travaux, on pourrait tenir pour définitivement réglée la tarification de tous les articles sur lesquels on se serait mis d'accord, et rendre le Tarif de 10 pour cent provisoirement applicable aux autres jusqu'à ce que l'entente complète se soit établie."

If the Commission were not competent to discuss the Tariff, for what reason had it been summoned?

Mr. Terrell, the United States' Delegate, recalled the fact that his Government, in consenting to the establishment of import duties, had demanded that American interests should be protected in Africa; and he declared that the best means of obtaining this object was to submit the proposed Tariff arrangements to the sanction of the Plenary Commission, in which the non-territorial trading Powers were represented equally within the three Congo States.

M. Bourée objected that the political, geographical, and commercial relations of the Congo were constantly changing; that his Government objected to the establishment of a hard and fast Tariff for a number of years; that, whatever was the system established, it should be subject to revision; and how was this to be done if subjected to international control?

Sir John Kirk pointed out that on the East Coast the moderate Tariff which has existed for thirty years has given rise to no difficulties; no changes had been made in it, and it had in nowise interfered with the exigencies of trade.

M. Banning, the Belgian Delegate, drew M. Bourée's attention to the observation made by his French colleague, M. Cogordan, in the sitting of the Conference of the 28th June,‡ which clearly indicated the establishment of a common Tariff for the whole Congo basin.

("M. Cogordan ajoute que l'idée de son collègue se rapproche de celle de Lord Vivian, et répond aux préoccupations de son Excellence, puisqu'elle tend à l'établissement d'un Tarif Général identique à tout le bassin, et sur tous les articles, qui n'auraient pas été dégrevés par la Commission.")

The President, in summing up the discussion, declared that all the Delegates, save only the French, had admitted that the question of submitting the work of the Sub-Commissions to the Plenary Commission should be reserved.

He begged the members to inquire whether their respective Governments would direct negotiations—"de Cabinet à Cabinet"—as to the Tariff arrangements for the western zone, and urged the French Minister to inquire at once whether the French Government would authorize him to accept the appointment of a Sub-Committee for the preparations of a common Tariff for the eastern zone.

All the Delegates undertook to submit the questions put by the President to their respective Governments.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Brussels, November 19, 1890.

* See Protocol No. 26, p. 579.

† Ibid., No. 30, p. 607.

‡ See Protocol No. 30, p. 607.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 20.)*

(No. 9.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 19, 1890.

IN our despatch No. 8 of to-day's date we have reported that the French Minister has undertaken to ask whether his Government will sanction the appointment of a Sub-Commission, composed of the Delegates of the three Powers interested on the eastern side of the zone, to examine the Tariff question as applied to that half of the conventional basin of the Congo, always under the full reserves made by us.

What the French reply may be we have no means of judging, but with a view to be prepared in the event of the answer being favourable, a private meeting was called this morning by Count Alvensleben, at which were present Count Alvensleben and M. Göhring for Germany; Baron de Renzis and M. Bradi for Italy; Sir John Kirk and Mr. Gosselin for Great Britain.

M. Göhring said that the object of the meeting was to frame a case in identic terms which might be submitted for the consideration of our respective Governments, and on which an expression of opinion might be asked.

The inclosed Memorandum is the result of our deliberations, and is to be understood not as an expression of opinion of one or other of us, but as stating the situation and suggesting those points likely to be raised on which, in case of our going into open Sub-Commission, it would be well we should beforehand be in possession of the opinion of our Government.

Germany having relinquished the idea of levying duties at the inland frontier of her free possessions behind the 10-mile coast strip which she takes over from Zanzibar, would at first sight appear to have little interest in the question. The contrary is, however, the case, as we to-day ascertained from M. Göhring, for Germany looks with extreme anxiety to the possibility of trade goods being sent into the centre of her inland market on Lake Tanganyika duty free by way of the Zambesi, Nyassa, and Tanganyika route, which is in British hands.

Italy is directly interested on the coast between the Equator and 5th degree of north latitude, on which line of coast, 400 miles in extent, there exist the four Treaty ports of Brava, Merka, Magdishu, and Warsheikh, where duties are and must be collected.

Our position is similar to that of Italy, and has been stated in the letter of the British East Africa Company, which formed the inclosure to your Lordship's despatch No. 265, Africa, of the 5th instant.

Being without any expression of your Lordship's views on this question, we gave no opinion as to the Tariff, but it was evident to us that the German Delegates would much prefer the common 5 per cent. duty now generally in force on the coast.

With reference to the Tariff proposed by the Congo State, we may point out that there are some marked omissions of certain important articles of trade such as kerosene oil, which comes in very large quantity from America, and which would certainly be landed outside the Zanzibar Treaty ports if left free of all duty, as would be the case were the Congo draft Tariff adopted without any modification.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure in No. 227.

*Memorandum on Informal Meeting of Delegates of three Eastern Powers,
November 19, 1890.*

POUR le Tarif scindé oriental du bassin conventionnel du Congo il s'agit des territoires sous l'influence de la Grande-Bretagne, de l'Allemagne, et de l'Italie, ou qu'aux autres territoires formant le bassin du côté oriental, l'Article IV de l'Acte de Berlin n'est pas applicable.

Le but du Tarif oriental à établir est que l'État Indépendant du Congo, et en général la partie occidentale du bassin conventionnel du Congo ne soit pas exposé, du côté oriental de ce bassin, à une concurrence sous des conditions inégales.

Il existe le long de Côte Orientale de l'Afrique, en général, une perception égale de droits *ad valorem* de 5 pour cent.

Cette perception de droit a l'effet que les marchandises qui par cette côte pénètrent dans l'intérieur sont grévées de droits de 5 pour cent.

Cette perception, cependant, ne s'étend pas à toute la côte renfermant les territoires auxquels est applicable l'Article IV de l'Acte de Berlin.

Il reste des parties de la côte où des droits ne sont pas levés du tout, ni ne peuvent être levés à la suite de l'Article IV de l'Acte de Berlin.

Il existe, donc, la possibilité qu'à travers ces lacunes, et en évitant les Douanes actuellement établies les marchandises pénètrent dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique et dans le voisinage de la partie occidentale du bassin conventionnel.

L'intérêt pour cette partie occidentale, et notamment pour l'État Indépendant du Congo, exige que cette possibilité soit écartée.

L'État Indépendant du Congo a proposé un Tarif pour certains nombres de marchandises à des taux différents et modérés.

Les droits d'entrée sur la Côte Occidentale devront, pour équilibrer la concurrence, se tenir autant que possible, au niveau des droits proposés par l'État du Congo.

Tandis que pour la Côte Occidentale les Tarifs sont encore en voie de préparation, pour la Côte Orientale dans sa plus grande partie des Tarifs existent déjà reposant sur des Traités anciens.

Afin d'éviter une perturbation et des inégalités sur des points l'un à côté de l'autre, il paraît indiqué que le Tarif qui à la Côte Orientale doit fermer les lacunes qui existent, se rapproche autant que possible du Tarif qui existe déjà pour le reste de cette côte.

Ce Tarif a paru après une expérience de longue date pratique, équitable, et ne donnant pas lieu à des difficultés.

Les Délégués des trois Puissances sont, en conséquence, d'accord de proposer à l'approbation de leurs Gouvernements que ce même Tarif soit appliqué aux lacunes qui existent actuellement encore sur la Côte Orientale.

Le même système devrait être applicable aux cas où, dans la partie orientale d'Afrique, des marchandises pénétreraient dans des territoires auxquels est applicable l'Article IV de l'Acte de Berlin, par des frontières intérieures, sans avoir passé préalablement par une autre frontière de la même Puissance, et y avoir payé des droits d'importation égaux ou plus élevés.

Le droit à percevoir suivant les dispositions précédentes devrait être obligatoire.

La durée de l'arrangement ci-dessus devrait dépendre des dispositions qui seront prises relativement à la durée du Tarif à introduire dans la partie occidentale du bassin conventionnel du Congo.

No. 228.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 21.)

(No. 58. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 20, 1890.

THE German Minister, whom I met at the ceremony in the States-General to-day, told me that he had just received a telegram from Berlin which showed that the Imperial Government were not disposed to accept the idea of a Conference *ad hoc* without having received some positive assurance from the Netherlands Government that they were prepared to withdraw from their present position.

M. Hartsen addressed a private letter to the Belgian Minister yesterday, in which he insisted on there being no misunderstanding as to his holding to the views he has all along expressed with respect to the Congo duties. It is evident, therefore, that the Dutch Government have for the present abandoned the conciliatory course on which they had entered, and that they remain as contumacious as ever.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 229.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 21.)

(No. 62. Slave Trade Conference.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, November 21, 1890.

M. BOURÉE, my French colleague, has just received instructions from Paris which admit of his associating himself with the other Delegates on the Plenary Commission in

No. 228*.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 20, 1890.

I HAVE to request you to inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs that Her Majesty's Government assented to a Conference on the Dutch proposals on the understanding that, in the event of their not being accepted, the Dutch Government would yield, in regard to the import duties, to the wishes of the other Powers.

It would now appear that his Excellency does not admit any such understanding, but reserves to himself entire liberty of action. Her Majesty's Government, consequently, do not, as at present advised, consider it desirable that the proposed Conference should take place.

agreeing to the nomination of a Sub-Commission with the object of preparing a draft Tariff for the eastern zone of the conventional basin of the Congo, subject always to all the reserves of principle made on both sides.

It is accordingly intended to convoke a meeting of the Plenary Commission to-morrow, Saturday, at 2 P.M., and the Sub-Commission for the East Coast Tariff will then begin its labours at once.

In these circumstances Sir John Kirk would be glad to receive an early answer from your Lordship on the points raised in the Memorandum which was inclosed in the British Delegates' despatch No. 9 of the 19th instant.

No. 230.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 22.)

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, November 22, 1890.

WE have the honour to report that at the meeting of the Plenary Commission held to-day, the French Minister announced that his Government agreed to the appointment of a Sub-Commission for the eastern zone of the conventional basin, composed of the Delegates of the three States—Great Britain, Germany, and Italy—territorially interested, subject to the reserve that this concession should form no precedent for the western zone; the French Government maintaining their refusal to submit the Tariff of the French Congo to the Commission in any form.

Subject to the reserves we have made, and to a future understanding with regard to the settlement of the Tariff arrangements for the western zone, we agreed to the immediate meeting of the Eastern Commission, at which the French Minister and nearly all the other Delegates were present as spectators.

It being clearly understood that the views expressed by the Delegates were of a purely personal nature, in no way binding on their respective Governments, M. Göhring, the German Delegate, explained the views embodied in the Memorandum which formed the inclosure of our despatch No. 9 of the 19th instant.

There will be no further meeting of the Eastern Sub-Commission until the three Powers territorially concerned shall have forwarded their instructions on the points raised in the Memorandum.

No. 231.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 67.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 22, 1890, 11.10 A.M.

IN answer to the despatch No. 9 from the Delegates, instructions will be sent to them. They should at the meeting abstain from committing Her Majesty's Government to any definite policy and confine themselves to a personal exchange of views.

No. 232.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 284. Confidential.)

Foreign Office, November 22, 1890.

[Transmits copy of Sir H. Rumbold's No. 57 of November 19, 1890: *ante*, No. 224.]

No. 233.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 285. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 22, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 275 of the 15th instant, I have to state that I approve your language to M. Bourée respecting the attitude of France in connection with the Tariff question.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 234.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 362. Confidential.)

Foreign Office, November 22, 1890.[Transmits copy of Sir H. Rumbold's No. 57 of November 19, 1890 : *ante*, No. 224.]

No. 235.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir W. White.

(No. 30. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 22, 1890.

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch No. 24, Africa, of the 9th instant, I approve your action in regard to the appointment of a Turkish Delegate to the Tariff Commission now sitting at Brussels in connection with the Slave Trade Conference.

I am, &c.

(Signed SALISBURY.)

No. 236.

The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.

(No. 10. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 23, 1890, midnight.

CONGO Tariff Commission.

I have agreed with the German Ambassador that Her Majesty's Government will act in conjunction with the German Government in making an endeavour to obtain the consent of France to the fixation by the Conference of a Tariff for the three West Coast States in the Basin of the Congo.

I have to request your Excellency to enter into communication with your German colleague with regard to this matter.

No. 237.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 24.)

(No. 59. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 22, 1890.

I CALLED upon M. Hartsen yesterday, and made him acquainted with the substance of your Lordship's telegram instructing me to inform him that the assent of Her Majesty's Government to a Conference to discuss the Dutch proposals was solely given on the understanding that if those proposals were not accepted, the Netherlands Government would defer to the wishes of the other Powers on the subject of the Congo duties; but that since he did not admit any such understanding, but reserved to himself complete liberty of action, Her Majesty's Government, as at present advised, did not think the proposed Conference desirable.

In order to guard against all possibility of a misunderstanding, I placed in M. Hartsen's hands a paraphrase of your Lordship's instructions.

M. Hartsen said that he would impart my communication to his colleagues.

In the course of some conversation which ensued, I observed to his Excellency that the change in his attitude was so remarkable that I could not for my part—and my opinion was shared by others—help thinking that it must to some extent be owing to foreign inspiration.

This remark thoroughly roused M. Hartsen. He said that it was an entire mistake to suppose he was acting in concert with any other Power. In proof of this he could only tell me in confidence that it was true that Baron Gericke had reported an attempt which had been made by the French Representative at Brussels to arrange some concerted action with him in the Tariff Commission, but that he had been instructed to give no hearing to

any such overtures. His Excellency then repeated what I have already had the honour to report (in my despatch No. 53, Africa, Very Confidential, of the 14th instant) of the care he had taken both here and at Paris to avoid any reference to the affairs of the Congo in his communications with the French Government. It was evident, he added, that in this question, as in others, he could not think of departing from the traditional policy of this country which inclined it to the side of Germany rather than of France. He admitted that at Berlin there had been at one time a suspicion of his favouring certain French designs in this affair, but he had had no difficulty in dispelling such notions.

I am bound to record my conviction that M. Hartsen was perfectly sincere in giving me these assurances. What, however, his Excellency dwelt upon most was the little progress made towards an agreement in the Tariff Commission. What, he inquired, would be the result of the Commission separating without having been able to come to an agreement? The Conference would have solemnly recorded a decision in favour of levying import duties which it would be impossible to carry out. It was quite evident that France and Portugal aimed at achieving the ruin of the "État Indépendant" by establishing Tariffs which would effectually divert trade from that State and attract it to their own territories.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 238.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 24.)

(No. 280. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 22, 1890.

BARON LAMBERMONT tells me in confidence that in consequence of the statement made by M. Bourée at the meeting of the Commission on the 18th instant to the effect that certain incidents had lately occurred affecting French commerce in the Congo State which had given rise to serious complaints in Parliament, and influenced the attitude of the French Government in the Congo Duties question, Baron Beyens, the Belgian Minister in Paris, has been instructed to ask for a personal interview with M. Ribot in order to ascertain from him exactly what the grievances are of which French commerce has complained, with a view to their redress.

The King is prepared to give full satisfaction to the French Government with respect to the recently enacted export duties and taxes by either modifying or even suppressing them, provided his Tariff of import duties is accepted, but His Majesty will firmly refuse to bind himself for the future with respect to the imposition of such taxes, as he considers that such an engagement would be inconsistent with his independence, and he is prepared to break off negotiations rather than submit to such a palpable infringement of his rights.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

P.S.—If the tiresome question of these obnoxious imports, which are at the root of the whole difficulty, could be satisfactorily settled by direct negotiation, it might materially facilitate a solution, and partially remove the objections of the French Government to submit their Tariff to the Commission.

V.

No. 239.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 24.)

(No. 281. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 22, 1890.

I HAVE tried to fathom the cause of the strange change of front on the part of France with respect to the Congo Duties question, which has not only delayed the progress of the Commission, but has also apparently had the bad effect of encouraging the Dutch Government to relapse into the perverse attitude which they seemed on the point of

abandoning if they could only find an honourable means of retreat from the untenable position they had taken up.

After comparing notes with Baron Lambertmont and my principle colleagues, I have come to the conclusion that the present attitude of the French Government arises from an unfortunate combination of circumstances, but primarily from the serious complaints of French commercial houses, of the disastrous effects on their trade of the new export duties and taxes recently enacted by the Congo Government, which have created a feeling of hostility and suspicion in France, and provoked interpellation in the Chamber which have alarmed the French Government, and, as M. Bourée explained to the Commission, determined them "to arrive at an understanding by means other than those which had been originally contemplated."

Admitting that these questions could not be discussed by the Commission, M. Bourée told us that his Government now claimed the right of negotiating the conditions of their Tariff arrangements, within the fixed maximum limits, directly with their neighbours in the Congo Basin proper, with a view to the settlement of their grievances, thus implying that his Government propose to use for the protection of French commercial interests against the Congo State, an arm which has been furnished to them by the Conference, with the exclusive object of helping that State!

But there are other reasons for the existing feeling of suspicion on the part of the French towards the Congo State. It probably dates from the negotiations for securing the reversion of that State to Belgium when the King refused to admit that the right of pre-emption secured to France in the event of the sale of the Congo State would apply to a gratuitous cession or alienation of a portion of its territory, and the feeling has lately been increased by the King's last visit to Berlin, which the French have connected with the Congo question, and by the rumours which have reached Paris of the unreserved promises of support which His Majesty had received from the Emperor and his Government. My Russian colleague, who has just returned from Paris, tells me that he was surprised to find that the hostility towards the Congo State was no longer confined to a small group of its personal enemies, but now extends over a much larger area.

This, I believe, to be a correct explanation of the changed attitude of the French Government, which should be kept in view in dealing with the difficulty it has caused.

In the meeting of the Commission to-day the French Minister justified the refusal of his Government to submit their Tariff for the French Congo to the Commission by other considerations.

While assenting, on the part of his Government, to the appointment of a Sub-Commission for the settlement of a common Tariff for the East Coast, he declared that this procedure could not form a precedent for the group of Powers on the West Coast, and asserted the right of France to negotiate "a common Tariff" for this group directly with her neighbours, within the maximum limit fixed by the Declaration, without the interference or control of the Commission, basing this pretension on the geographical position of the French possessions, lying partly within and partly without the conventional zone, and therefore partially beyond the purview of the Commission (an argument, by the way, which equally applies to the German and Italian possessions on the East Coast, which are precisely in the same position), and on the impossibility of allowing delicate Tariff arrangements applying to the whole of this region, necessarily affected by local considerations and liable to modification, to be permanently fixed and controlled by Powers having no local interests or knowledge of such circumstances.

I inclose a copy of M. Bourée's declaration.

The procedure by which the French Government propose to carry out their plan, involving preliminary direct negotiations between the Governments concerned and the subsequent settlement of Tariff details by special Delegates outside the Commission, must necessarily involve considerable delay, and would leave nothing more for the Technical Commission to do after completing its lop-sided task of framing a common Tariff for the East Coast, and but little time to overcome the resistance of Holland before the date fixed for the ratification of the General Act, if, as is probable, she maintains her recalcitrant attitude so long as she finds an ally in France.

I fear, however, that there is little hope of inducing the French Government to modify their determination on this point, and as we could not allow the whole work of the Brussels Conference to be wrecked on a question of procedure unless it should involve the sacrifice of the principles of equal treatment of goods and freedom of transit established by the Berlin Act, it is worth considering what guarantees the French proposals would give as against the infringement of these principles, as well as against an arbitrary exercise of the power of altering their Tariff at will to the detriment of the Congo State.

On this latter point Baron Lambertmont assures me that the King and the Congo

Government, after a careful examination of the question, have no serious apprehensions. He points out that, as regards arms, the French Government are held by their declaration in Conference in favour of their exclusion; that as regards spirits they are bound by the stipulations of the General Act, while in respect to tissues, the most important article of British and Dutch trade, the very low duty imposed on them by the Congo State, which allowing for under valuations will amount to less than 5 per cent., will defy competition, or any contraband trade on a large scale, with all its risks and penalties, by the longer and more expensive routes through the French Congo, even though a low duty should be imposed there.

The guarantee that the French Tariff is a fair one, and that it will not admit of differential treatment is, on the one hand, their undertaking that the Tariff agreed on shall be common to the Powers in the Congo Basin, and, on the other, the pledge of the Congo State to submit its Tariff to the Commission; as an additional security we might require a formal guarantee to be given by France to the Commission that she will not apply differential treatment, either directly or indirectly, nor interfere with freedom of transit.

Baron Lambermont is inclined to think that the procedure proposed by France merits serious examination, and might be accepted in the last resource. I would only do so subject to these precautions, and if there is no other way of solving the difficulty.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 239.

Minutes of the Sitting of the Commission, November 22, 1890.

[See *infra*, Inclosure 1 in No. 242.]

No. 240.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 24.)

(No. 282. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 23, 1890.

I HAVE not referred in my previous despatch to a suggestion made by the Portuguese Minister, as reported in Sir John Kirk's despatch of to-day, that a compromise might be effected between the conflicting views of the French Government and those of the rest of the Commission, by an arrangement that the group of Powers on the West Coast should prepare, and submit to the approval of the Commission, a statement of the "maxima" duties to be levied by each State, or group of States, on the various articles of import, leaving the "minima" duties to be imposed at their discretion.

If the "minima" duties could also be fixed, I cannot but think that this suggestion contains the elements of a satisfactory compromise, although the French Minister held out no hope that it would be favourably entertained by his Government, seeing that it differed in principle from their proposal.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 241.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 24.)

(No. 283. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 23, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose two despatches, under flying seal, addressed to your Lordship by the British Delegates, recording the proceedings at the sitting of the Plenary Commission, and at the first sitting of the Oriental Sub-Commission, both held yesterday.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 24.)*

(No. 10.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 23, 1890.

AT a meeting held yesterday the French Minister read the accompanying extract from a despatch he had just received.

From this it will be seen that the French Government refuse to submit the Tariff to be applied to the French Congo to the Commission, and demand for themselves the right to fix and change their Tariff at pleasure, leaving any arrangement as between themselves and the two neighbouring Congo States to be the result of direct negotiation with Portugal and the Congo State.

The reason given by France for this demand is their wish to assimilate the fiscal system of the French Congo with that of the adjoining Colony of Gaboon.

Looking at the list of import duties given in the Table that accompanied our despatch No. 5 of the 8th instant, it will be seen that the average import duty now levied in Gaboon amounts to 10 per cent. *ad valorem*, which is the maximum rate allowed by the Declaration of the 2nd July; it will also be seen that goods of French origin are admitted into the French Colony at a reduction of 40 per cent. on the duties stated.

France has never formally renounced the right to reduce duties within the free zone on her national goods, while the Portuguese Minister has formally maintained in Commission that such a reduction would not amount to a differential treatment within the meaning of the Act of Berlin. If, therefore, the system now in force in the French Colony of Gaboon were to be extended to the Upper Congo, French goods would reach the upper river on more advantageous terms than those of any other nation.

It is true, however, that in reality this difference never could amount to much, were the Congo State to bind itself, as it is willing to do, to adhere to the moderate Tariff it has proposed.

The only concession now made by the French is that they expressed themselves ready to allow an examination in Sub-Commission by the three Powers territorially interested, of the Tariff system best suited to the eastern division of the Congo conventional basin, guarding themselves, however, against this being used as a precedent to be applied to the West Coast, where alone France has territorial interests.

The Portuguese Minister brought forward, and for the first time formally presented a compromise he had already mentioned, namely, that the Powers should submit to the approval of the Commission a maximum duty of different articles for each State, or group of States, leaving each free to reduce the duty in the case of any particular class of goods.

The French Minister stated in reply that he had already submitted a somewhat similar scheme to his Government, and that it had not received any support. Such a scheme would meet with opposition on the part of the German Delegates, who have insisted that the duties must be compulsory.

After a discussion, in which various members took part, a Sub-Commission consisting of the Delegates of Great Britain, Germany, and Italy, was appointed, subject to all reserves already recorded, to consider the eastern division of the zone.

No date was fixed for a further meeting in full Commission, and it will be seen that no practical advance has been made, we and most of the Delegates demanding, on the one hand, that the Tariffs must be submitted to the Commission, while France insists upon autonomy in the sense she has explained.

It must also be kept in mind that were the French proposals accepted, the position of Holland would be rendered more justifiable than before, seeing that holding no territorial possessions in the zone her interests would not be represented, while, with others, she would be subject to an indirect differential treatment in the manner claimed by Portugal and not denied by France.

We inclose a Memorandum of what passed at this meeting of the Commission.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 242.

Minutes of the Sitting of the Commission, November 22, 1890.

(Extrait.)

M. BOURÉE fait la déclaration suivante :—

Nous sommes opposés à l'idée d'un Tarif commun tel qu'on l'a défini en dernier lieu ; nous ne pouvons admettre que l'échelle de nos taxes soit soumise pour le présent et pour l'avenir à l'approbation d'un grand nombre de Puissances non possessionnées dans la région visée. L'établissement de ces droits est fort délicat. Il s'agit de contrées imparfaitement connues, dont les ressources se développeront dans un ordre et avec une rapidité incertains. Des tâtonnements sont inévitables ; subordonner la réalisation de ces essais à l'entente générale et unanime d'un très grand nombre de Puissances serait la rendre impossible. Nous voulons bien assurément aider l'État du Congo à se procurer des ressources et nous l'avons montré, mais nous ne saurions sacrifier pour cela les intérêts légitimes et évidents de notre commerce. Nous sommes tenus à d'autant plus de prudence et nous avons besoin de précautions d'autant plus grandes que la situation géographique de nos possessions accroît les difficultés de notre tâche. Ces territoires sont coupés par la ligne qui forme le bassin conventionnel du Congo ; les droits que nous aurons à établir devront être étendus à toute la région qui nous appartient et frapper ainsi des *pays placés en dehors du programme de la Commission elle-même*. A défaut, des Douanes intérieures devraient être créées, ce qui ne serait pas pour nous une médiocre source d'embarras. Des questions de cet ordre, la valeur des concessions réciproques qui peuvent être consenties, les conditions d'établissement et de perception des droits, ne sauraient être utilement étudiées que par les autorités directement intéressées. Aussi, sommes-nous prêts à associer à notre travail celles qui se trouvent dans ce cas, c'est-à-dire les Puissances possessionnées à la Côte Occidentale, nos voisins, le Portugal et l'État Libre. Sous cette forme restreinte, nous sommes disposés à accueillir l'idée d'un Tarif commun et à en préparer l'élaboration. Il me semble, surtout si l'on se rapporte aux déclarations que nous avons faites touchant la liberté absolue dont chacun devait jouir en matière de Tarifs, qu'il est difficile d'aller plus loin dans le sens des suggestions formulées par l'État Libre, et que la concession faite ainsi par nous n'est pas d'importance médiocre. Il ne paraît pas cependant, d'après les comptes-rendus dont vous m'avez fait part, que la Commission en ait apprécié la portée, suffisamment évidente pourtant.

Quant à la procédure que nous recommandons pour la réalisation de nos vues, il est facile de se rendre compte de ce que nous voulons dire par une entente, de Cabinet à Cabinet. La chose est absolument claire : nous voulons soustraire notre Tarif à la Commission et à toute réunion ou Sous-Commission recevant d'elle son mandat. Nous comptons échanger nos vues avec les Chancelleries intéressées ou avec leurs Représentants, pourvu que ceux-ci agissent en cette capacité et non si ce sont les mêmes personnes en tant que membres de la Commission. Des pourparlers préliminaires devront sans doute avoir lieu de Cabinet à Cabinet, et quand les bases d'une entente seront trouvées, des Délégués spéciaux, soit les agents à Bruxelles des pays intéressés, soit d'autres, régleront le détail. Le tout peut se faire assez rapidement si nous trouvons, comme nous l'espérons, dans ces pourparlers, autant de bonne volonté que nous sommes disposés à en apporter nous-mêmes.

C'est dans un esprit non moins conciliant que nous envisageons la dernière phase des négociations de Bruxelles dont vous venez de m'instruire et que je rappelais au début de cette lettre. Nous entendons, pour chaque cas où ces réserves sont nécessaires, les limiter aux bornes les plus étroites, à celles que le souci des intérêts de nos nationaux rend clairement nécessaires. Nous n'avons nullement l'intention de nous opposer à ce que les Puissances règlent, par le moyen d'une Sous-Commission, le Tarif commun applicable à la Côte Orientale, où nous n'avons pas de possessions, et si un mandat de la Commission elle-même est nécessaire pour que ces travaux soient entrepris, nous consentons à ce qu'il soit donné. La seule réserve que nous ayons à faire, et elle est évidente, est que cette décision conciliante ne puisse, en aucun cas, pour ce qui concerne nos intérêts de la Côte Ouest, nous être opposée comme formant précédent envers nous.

Je ne doute pas que la clarté de ces explications ne permette à tous de se rendre compte du véritable caractère de nos propositions et de l'attitude que nous n'avons cessé d'observer en ce qui concerne l'œuvre généreuse due à l'initiative du Souverain de l'État Libre du Congo.

Inclosure 2 in No. 242.

Memorandum on the Sitting of the Plenary Commission, November 22, 1890.

The President having invited the French Minister to communicate the views of the French Government on the two points left in suspense at the last sitting, *M. Bourée* reads an extract from a despatch received that morning from Paris. (See inclosure 1 in despatch.)

Count de Macedo, the Portuguese Minister, reverts to the *intermediate* proposition he had already made, by which the maximum rates of each group of articles should be fixed by the Commission, leaving the Governments interested full discretion as to the fixing of the minima. He thinks that a compromise on these lines would satisfy all the Powers concerned, and proposes to bring it forward as a substantial proposal on an early occasion. His instructions would allow him to support the French proposals, but he is not without hope that in his own scheme will be found a solution of the existing difficulty.

Count de Macedo again complains of the uncertainty which had arisen with regard to the phrase "conventional basin of the Congo," and repeats that he has not claimed to take part in the Eastern Sub-Commission, simply because his Government maintain that the Portuguese East Coast possessions are entirely outside the limits of the discussion; he hopes that this view is shared by all the Commission.

M. Bourée, the French Minister, reverting to *Count de Macedo's* "*projet intermédiaire*," points out that this term is hardly applicable, as a question, not of *form*, but of *principle*, is involved; he cannot say what view the French Government would take, were the propositions officially brought to their notice; but they have not hitherto worked with favour on a somewhat similar proposition which he had himself put before them.

The President having proposed that all discussion of the French answer should be postponed until the Delegates had time to study its bearings, *Lord Vivian* observes that from his French colleague's statement, he gathers that the French Government, while consenting to give a mandate to the Eastern Sub-Commission, to enable it to begin work at once, refuse to submit their Tariff arrangements for the group of Powers on the Western Coast to the Commission in any shape or form. He would be very loath to raise difficulties, but he asks, how can the French answer possibly be reconciled with the demand put forward by the United States' Representative on the 18th instant, as a condition of the adhesion of his Government, viz., that the Tariffs for both coasts must be examined and sanctioned by the Plenary Commission.

The anxiety which is shared by the whole Commission, to find a plan acceptable to all the Powers, must not lead it, in attempting to avoid Charybdis to fall into Scylla.

M. Bourée replies that there is so great a difference in the circumstances of the two zones, that a modification of form can be all the more readily admitted; he suggests beginning with the eastern half of the zone "*en faisant ce qui peut se faire, en allant du simple au composé*." Unless some understanding can be come to, the whole work of the Conference will fall to the ground ("*sera frappé de caducité*"). He is quite ready to take part in giving a collective mandate to the Eastern Sub-Committee.

The President explains that in return for the abolition of the American Treaty with the International Congo Association, there must necessarily be a new Commercial Treaty between the United States and the Independent State. The Congo draft Tariff was very moderate, and had been drawn up on these lines, expressly in order to meet the views of, amongst other Powers, the United States' Government. The latter would prefer a Tariff common to the three Congos; but it was already clear that they would inevitably be led to frame an identic Tariff: he does not consider the difficulty insurmountable.

In reply to the Portuguese Delegate, the President states that it had all through the discussion in Conference been always understood that the reserves made at Berlin with regard to the Portuguese east coast possessions are and remain intact; he is sure that the whole Commission support him in this opinion.

Lord Vivian states that the undertaking of the Eastern Sub-Commission to begin work, notwithstanding the declaration just read by his French colleague, is a proof of the great anxiety of the Delegates of the Powers concerned to facilitate by their good example the solution of all difficulties; that he has learnt with satisfaction that his French colleague will join in giving the mandate authorizing the Sub-Commission to begin work; but he would have much preferred that this permission had not been accompanied by the declaration that the procedure must not form a precedent for the West Coast, and that under no circumstances would the French Government submit their Tariff to the Plenary Commission; he does not formally raise the question now, but he cannot but fear that such

a decision, if it is to be considered as final, may seriously compromise the successful zone of the work intrusted to the Commission.

The sitting is adjourned.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Brussels, November 23, 1890.

No. 243.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
Received November 24.)*

(No. 11.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 23, 1890.

FRANCE having given her consent to the appointment of a Sub-Commission to consider the Tariff system applicable to the eastern side of the conventional basin of the Congo, where subject to the rules of the Act of Berlin, the Delegates of Great Britain, Germany, and Italy met yesterday for a personal exchange of views, in no way binding their Governments. There were present the Delegates from France and of nearly all the other Powers.

In opening the meeting, Count Alvensleben being called to preside, referred to the reserves under which we acted, and we declared that, being without instructions, nothing could be held to imply an adhesion on the part of our Governments to any remarks we might make.

We then pointed out that the only draft Tariff that had as yet been before the British Government was that submitted by the Congo State Delegates to the full Commission, and proposed to them as the basis of a Tariff that might be extended to the whole of the conventional Congo Basin. Taking into consideration local conditions, the Powers had, however, already consented to a division of the region into two zones, in order to facilitate an arrangement. This implied, of necessity, a certain modification of the principle of a General Tariff common to the whole basin, which, moreover, was a principle not agreed to by all the Powers.

M. Göhring then made a statement on behalf of himself and Count Alvensleben, repeating all that was contained in the Memorandum we inclosed in our despatch No. 9 of the 19th instant, to which we beg to refer. He laid particular stress upon the necessity there was for a compulsory Tariff, and called attention to the Zambesi and Nyassa route by which goods would enter the free zone.

The Congo State Delegates asked the members of the Sub-Commission, with reference to what M. Göhring had proposed, whether it was not possible to levy a higher tax on trade arms and ammunition than the common 5 per cent. duty now in force on the East Coast.

Sir John Kirk observed that on the East Coast there were Treaties with Great Britain, Germany, France, and Portugal, which limited the duty on arms to 5 per cent.; but that he thought that an arrangement might be come to outside the Commission that would allow of a higher duty being levied; or, the same result might be arrived at if the duty were fixed at 10 per cent. on trade arms declared,—when taken out of bonded warehouses,—as intended for the interior within the free zone.

It was agreed by the members of the Commission to refer the proposal as explained by M. Göhring to their respective Governments. The meeting being open, a Report of the views expressed will no doubt be furnished to their respective Governments by the other Delegates.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 244.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 24.)

(No. 11. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, November 24, 1890.

I HAVE spoken to Count Münster on the subject of your Lordship's telegram No. 10, Africa, of this morning.

[809]

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His Excellency inquires whether by the words "fixation of Tariff" is meant the framing of the whole Tariff, or only the fixation by the Conference of a maximum and minimum Tariff, the details within those limits being left to be dealt with separately by the Western Congo States. The latter arrangement, Count Münster states, would satisfy the German Government if we agree, and France declines to accept our view of the Brussels Declaration. His Excellency's instructions, which he showed me, direct him to ascertain from me the arguments upon which our representation is based, and to urge them upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs at a subsequent interview.

It seems to me that our principal argument lies in the discredit which France would incur if, by her opposition on such a point, the labours of the Brussels Conference should be rendered abortive.

In assuming her present attitude, France is probably actuated by a desire to keep something in hand for subsequent commercial negotiations, with Belgium more especially.

I am to see M. Ribot on Wednesday morning, and should be glad of your Lordship's reply before then.

I may state that I have none of the correspondence on this subject beyond the end of October.

No. 245.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.**

(No. 217.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 24, 1890.

I TRANSMIT herewith to your Excellency copy of a despatch which I have addressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin upon the question of the attitude of Holland in regard to the Brussels Conference.†

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 246.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 286. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 24, 1890.

I HAVE to acknowledge the despatch No. 9 of the 19th instant from the Delegates, inclosing a Memorandum which had been drawn up with respect to the Tariff of the eastern part of the Congo Basin at an informal meeting of the British, German, and Italian Delegates.

The terms in which the Memorandum is conceived are somewhat general, and are capable of two interpretations.

The Memorandum proposes for the adoption of all territories under British influence, as well as those under German and Italian influence, in the eastern half of Africa, a 5 per cent Tariff.

The usual meaning of this phrase would be a maximum Tariff of 5 per cent., and a State accepting it by Treaty would be understood to engage itself not to raise the Tariff above that point, while retaining full liberty to accept a lower duty if it pleased. To a 5 per cent. Tariff in this sense Her Majesty's Government have no objection.

But the arguments used appear to indicate that the phrase is intended to indicate a minimum as well as a maximum Tariff, and that any State accepting it will not be at liberty to charge less. The Tariff is intended to have a protectionist operation and to save the Congo State, or other States, from commercial competition reaching them over their inland frontiers.

Her Majesty's Government cannot accept the obligation not to charge less than 5 per cent. without the consent of other Powers.

The amount is not large, but it would be an infraction of principles which Her Majesty's Government uniformly observes in the regulation of all fiscal duties over which it has any control.

If the Congo State desires to protect its commerce from competition reaching it across the British frontier, it should do so by means of its own Custom-houses established upon that frontier.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

* Also to Lord Vivian (No. 287).

† No. 264.

No. 247.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Count de Bylandt.

M. le Ministre,

Foreign Office, November 24, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 17th instant, inclosing a Memorandum respecting the attitude of the Netherlands Government in regard to the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels and their recent proposals to the Powers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 248.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 26.)

(No. 284. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 25, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith, under flying seal, two despatches addressed to your Lordship by the British Delegates, inclosing the *procès-verbaux* of the sittings of the Congo Duties Technical Commission held on the 6th, 13th, and 18th instant, and reporting that the Italian Government accept the views set forth in the Memorandum referred to in your Lordship's despatch No. 286, Africa, of yesterday.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 249.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 26.)*

(No. 12.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 25, 1890.

WE have the honour to transmit herewith three copies of the *procès-verbaux*, reporting the sittings of the Congo Duties Commission, held on the 6th, 13th, and 18th instant.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 249.

Minutes of Sitting of November 6, 1890.

Étaient présents:

M. le Baron Lambermont, Président; M. le Comte d'Alvensleben; M. Göhring; M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch; M. Émile Banning; M. F.-G. Schack de Brockdorff; M. Gutierrez de Aguëra; M. Janssen; M. van Neuss; Mr. E. H. Terrell; M. Bourée; M. de Chavannes; Sir John Kirk; Mr. Gosselin; M. le Chevalier Bardi; M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen; M. le Comte de Macedo; M. A. de Castilho; M. le Prince Ouroussoff; M. de Burenstam.

Assistait également à la séance: Lord Vivian.

M le Baron Gericke de Herwynen donne lecture de la déclaration suivante:—

“ M. le Président,—Messieurs,

“ Permettez-moi de vous donner brièvement quelques explications concernant ma présence parmi vous.

“ Mon Gouvernement n'avait pas eu d'abord l'intention de se faire représenter dans la Commission actuelle, ses objections relatives au système de droits d'entrée dans le Bassin du Congo, dont la Commission aura à s'occuper, continuant à subsister.

“ Il a toutefois cru pouvoir modifier son attitude après avoir reçu du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Roi des Belges l'assurance, donnée également au nom des autres Puissances, que la présence de Délégués Néerlandais, à titre officieux, n'impliquerait pour le Cabinet de La Haye aucun engagement quant à ses déterminations ultérieures.

“ Il a voulu dès lors éviter de son côté tout ce qui pourrait avoir l'apparence d'un manque de courtoisie et nuire par conséquent à une bonne harmonie, si désirable dans une affaire ne se rapportant à aucune question politique importante, mais dans laquelle il s'agit simplement d'une divergence d'opinion entre Puissances amies au sujet du moyen le plus convenable de trouver des ressources dans un but déterminé.

“ Tel est, Messieurs, le motif qui me procure l'honneur d'assister officieusement à vos réunions.

“ Je suivrai certes avec intérêt le cours des délibérations sur le système des droits d'entrée, désirant toutefois abandonner à d'autres le soin de régler cette affaire dans le sens que paraîtra le moins préjudiciable au commerce, si tant est que l'on veuille admettre que des droits d'entrée dans le Bassin du Congo ne soient pas par eux-mêmes inadmissibles en principe.”

M. le Président rappelle que le Gouvernement Belge a servi d'intermédiaire entre l'État du Congo et les Puissances pour la communication des propositions que la Commission est appelée à examiner en ce moment. Il a fait connaître en même temps aux divers Cabinets qu'à son avis il y avait lieu d'inviter le Gouvernement Néerlandais à prendre part aux négociations, quoique ce dernier ne figurât pas parmi les Signataires de l'Acte Général et de la Déclaration. La même communication indiquait dans quel but, dans quel esprit et dans quelles conditions cette invitation serait adressée au Cabinet de La Haye. Toutes les Puissances ayant donné leur assentiment, l'invitation a été transmise au Gouvernement Néerlandais. D'après ses termes exprès, celle-ci avait été dictée par un sentiment de déférence envers les Pays-Bas ; elle devait procurer au commerce Néerlandais une occasion de défendre ses intérêts, et, afin de lever tous les scrupules, elle portait que la présence de Délégués Néerlandais dans la Commission n'engagerait en rien les déterminations ultérieures de leur Gouvernement.

M. le Président, en donnant acte à M. le Ministre des Pays-Bas de sa déclaration, ajoute qu'une participation plus complète du Délégué Néerlandais aux travaux de la Commission eût répondu davantage aux vœux de l'assemblée ; il croit interpréter la pensée de ses collègues en disant que cette participation, telle qu'elle a été définie, est néanmoins justement appréciée.

Passant à l'ordre du jour de la séance, M. le Président juge opportun de rappeler que, selon la Déclaration du 2 Juillet et surtout d'après les délibérations qui l'ont précédée, il est clairement établie que la Commission actuelle est composée non de Plénipotentiaires venant remettre en question les problèmes déjà résolus, mais de Délégués ayant pour mandat précis et limité d'exécuter une Résolution de la Conférence.

Lorsqu'on a défini ce mandat, on lui a donné pour objet le régime douanier à établir dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo. Plus tard, les termes “ régime douanier ” ayant paru comprendre les Règlements de Douane, on a dit clairement qu'il ne s'agissait que des *tarifications*.

La Commission est donc appelée à élaborer le Tarif des droits d'entrée. Son mandat ne va pas au delà.

Avant d'aborder l'examen des chiffres du Tarif, il ne sera pas sans utilité de donner quelques éclaircissements sur l'économie du projet. Celui-ci a pour but, comme le porte la communication qui a été faite aux Puissances, de faciliter une entente entre *toutes* les parties intéressées.

M. le Président demande à MM. les Délégués du Congo s'ils sont en mesure de faire part à l'assemblée des explications qu'ils auraient à présenter à ce point de vue et qui formeraient comme le commentaire du projet de Tarif.

M. Janssen s'exprime en ces termes :—

“ La Déclaration annexée à l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles porte qu'une négociation sera ouverte entre les Puissances à l'effet d'arrêter, dans la limite maxima de 10 pour cent de la valeur, les conditions du régime douanier à instituer dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo.

“ L'État Indépendant du Congo, voulant donner une preuve nouvelle de son esprit de conciliation, en nourrissant l'espoir d'amener une entente définitive entre toutes les Puissances, désirant d'un autre côté préparer le terrain de la discussion au sein de la Commission, a élaboré un projet de Tarif très modéré, qui est soumis aujourd'hui à votre appréciation.

M. le Comte de Macedo est d'avis que la mise en discussion immédiate du projet de Tarif présuppose la solution d'une question qui est restée en suspens jusqu'à ce jour. Cette question était de savoir si la Commission était appelée à se prononcer sur un Tarif commun ou si on laisserait à chaque Puissance la liberté de tarifier à son gré, dans la limite de 10 pour cent. *M. le Ministre de France*, afin de rallier les opinions divergentes qui s'étaient manifestées sur ce point, avait proposé une rédaction qui ne préjugait rien à cet égard, et qui avait permis à tous les Plénipotentiaires d'accepter les Résolutions de la Conférence.

Ses instructions l'autorisent à se rallier au principe même du droit d'entrée et au maximum de 10 pour cent, en maintenant l'exclusion de droits différentiels et de droits de transit, et le retour après vingt ans à la situation prévue par l'Article IV de l'Acte Général de Berlin, mais elles l'obligent en même temps à demander que, dans les limites de ce maximum, chaque Puissance conserve la liberté d'établir les Tarifs comme elle l'entend. Il ne pourrait donc entrer dans la discussion d'un Tarif unique.

M. le Ministre de Portugal fait valoir à l'appui de sa thèse différents arguments résultant de la difficulté d'appliquer un même Tarif à des contrées placées dans des conditions géographiques et économiques aussi différentes que celles du bassin conventionnel du Congo. De plus, il ne saurait admettre qu'on établisse un Tarif pour une durée de quinze ans sans avoir en même temps la possibilité de le modifier ; en effet, la situation économique d'un pays peut changer beaucoup endéans un pareil laps de temps ; il faut donc laisser la porte ouverte aux modifications. Il propose de rechercher si, entre les deux systèmes en présence, celui du Tarif commun et celui de la liberté complète, il n'existe pas un terme moyen qui permettrait à la fois de procurer à l'État du Congo les ressources dont il a besoin et de rallier à l'établissement des droits d'entrée ceux qui craignent encore qu'il en résultera un grand préjudice pour le commerce. Si la Commission est d'avis de passer immédiatement à la discussion du Tarif unique, *M. le Comte de Macedo* ne pourra y prendre part jusqu'à ce que de nouvelles instructions lui soient parvenues.

M. le Président répond que la question soulevée par *M. le Ministre de Portugal* peut être envisagée de diverses manières et conduire à des solutions différentes. La Conférence elle-même a varié sur ce point. Les réponses de la plupart des Puissances autorisent à penser que l'établissement d'un Tarif commun ne soulèverait pas d'objections de leur part. A vrai dire, si l'on se reporte à l'idée qui a inspiré une grande partie des Résolutions prises à la Conférence de Berlin, on voit que les Puissances, en étendant jusqu'à l'Océan Indien le territoire auquel devait s'appliquer le régime qu'il s'agissait d'inaugurer, en créant ce qu'elles appelèrent le bassin conventionnel du Congo, avaient en vue d'instituer un régime commercial uniforme pour tous les territoires qu'il comprendrait, de fonder en quelque sorte un État idéal, sans précédent dans l'histoire, et de doter toutes ses parties des mêmes garanties, des mêmes facilités, en matière de douanes comme en toute autre. Pour des raisons qui ne sont pas à rechercher ici, le régime adopté pour les importations fut celui de la libre entrée. Aujourd'hui il s'agit de lui substituer un régime nouveau et d'établir des droits d'entrée ; si l'on permettait à chaque Puissance de remanier le Tarif à son gré, on risquerait peut-être de ne pas rester dans l'idée générale que la Conférence de Berlin a voulu réaliser.

Sans toutefois insister sur cette considération rétrospective, *M. le Président* fait remarquer que, depuis l'époque où l'on a cherché dans la Conférence de Bruxelles à se mettre d'accord sur la question du Tarif commun, les circonstances se sont modifiées ; on se trouve actuellement devant une situation nouvelle, caractérisée d'un côté par les inquiétudes de certains intérêts, et, de l'autre, par le désir de les rassurer. A ce point de vue spécial, une solution qui laisserait toute initiative à chacune des Puissances serait peut-être moins propre à conduire au but qu'une formule dès maintenant bien nette et bien définie. Le projet de Tarif soumis à la Commission semble rentrer dans ce dernier ordre d'idées, et, à ce titre, il pourrait, semble-t-il, faire l'objet d'une sorte d'examen préparatoire.

Quant à l'idée exprimée par *M. de Macedo*, qu'il serait contraire à la nature des choses en Afrique de maintenir le Tarif pendant une durée trop longue, *M. le Président* reconnaît qu'elle n'est pas sans fondement ; on ne peut oublier que le centre du Continent Africain était à peu près inconnu il y a vingt ans à peine ; les progrès réalisés depuis lors ont dépassé toutes les prévisions, et l'on ne peut savoir dès à présent quels changements la situation actuelle peut subir dans un avenir même prochain. Il ne serait pas prudent, dès lors, de fixer d'une manière absolue les conditions qui régiront le mouvement commercial. La Commission, tout en restant dans les termes de son mandat, pourrait décider que le Tarif sera maintenu pendant une certaine période, après laquelle il sera sujet à révision. Mais il devrait être bien entendu que pareille révision n'impliquerait pas la possibilité de revenir à l'abolition de tout Tarif, ni même de diminuer les ressources qu'on a l'intention

d'assurer à l'État le plus directement engagé dans la répression de la Traite. Sous cette réserve, M. le Président ne voit pas d'objection à ce que la Commission examine s'il ne conviendrait pas de procéder à une révision après un certain laps de temps à déterminer, conformément, du reste, à une règle qui a déjà été adoptée pour les alcools et les armes.

M. le Président conclut en disant qu'en l'état des instructions de quelques Délégués on ne peut leur demander de prendre dès à présent des engagements sur la question du Tarif commun, mais il croit qu'il n'y aurait aucun inconvénient, toute réserve étant faite sur le principe, à se livrer à l'examen du projet préparé. Après que les chiffres auront été passés en revue, on restera toujours libre de décider si les tarifications proposées conviendront à toutes les Puissances intéressées ou à certains groupes d'entre elles, ou encore s'il vaut mieux s'en tenir à une solution exclusive de l'uniformité. Le cours du débat pourra d'ailleurs révéler des combinaisons qui faciliteraient une entente générale.

M. Bourée se rallie dans une large mesure à ce que vient de dire M. le Ministre de Portugal. Quand, au sein de la Conférence, il a proposé une solution transactionnelle pour rallier les vues divergentes, le Gouvernement Français l'avait chargé de réserver son opinion. Au cours des débats, lorsqu'on cherchait un mode d'application qui permît d'atteindre le but commun, il s'est toujours efforcé de faire prévaloir le principe de l'indépendance de chacun chez soi. Il serait encore dans les vœux du Gouvernement Français de réserver pour chaque Puissance le droit de tarifier à son gré dans ses possessions du Congo. Mais il va de soi que cette liberté ne pourrait être absolue : sinon, par des faveurs accordées aux produits nationaux, on arriverait à ouvrir sur toute la périphérie de cette vaste région des portes par où les produits pénétreraient librement chez les voisins. Un tel résultat ne saurait être admis. Mais, entre un semblable régime et celui qui fait passer un niveau égal sur tous, il y aurait place, sans doute, pour des solutions intermédiaires qui seraient acceptables.

En ce qui regarde les chiffres du Tarif, M. le Ministre de France déclare qu'il est sans instructions pour les discuter. Si l'on voulait s'arrêter, dès à présent, à l'examen de ceux qui sont proposés, l'embarras s'accroîtrait encore, car ils peuvent être envisagés très différemment si l'on se place au point d'un Tarif commun ou d'un Tarif régional.

M. Bourée ne voudrait toutefois pas retarder la discussion que l'on demande, mais il ne peut donner son assentiment que sous les réserves déjà énoncées par M. le Ministre de Portugal, et d'ailleurs admises par M. le Président lui-même. Il est obligé, quant au fond, d'attendre les instructions de son Gouvernement.

M. le Président croit devoir revenir sur une considération qui lui paraît de nature à influencer sur les décisions de l'assemblée, et qui ne se présentait pas avec le même caractère d'opportunité dans les débats de la Conférence. Les membres de la Commission savent tous que des Tarifs existent déjà dans certaines régions du bassin conventionnel du Congo sous le régime de l'Acte Général de Berlin. Ces Tarifs ne sont l'objet d'aucune critique. C'est du côté de la région occidentale que des inquiétudes se sont produites dans le commerce. Les intérêts qui se croient atteints demandent à être rassurés. Le Tarif proposé semblait particulièrement adapté à la région que visent spécialement les alarmes du commerce. C'est là une raison sérieuse de suivre la marche indiquée. L'accord pourrait toujours se chercher ultérieurement sur la question soulevée par MM. les Ministres de France et de Portugal.

Sous cette réserve, M. le Président pense que l'assemblée admettra qu'il soit procédé à une première lecture des chiffres du Tarif, n'ayant d'autre portée qu'un échange de vues et n'engageant personne.

Les Délégués, consultés par M. le Président, donnent leur assentiment à la proposition ainsi entendue.

Répondant à une demande des Délégués Britanniques, M. le Président constate que, dans la pensée de ses auteurs, le projet de Tarif a été préparé en vue d'une application dans tout le bassin conventionnel du Congo, tel que l'a défini l'Article I^{er} de l'Acte Général de Berlin, mais sans porter atteinte au droit de libre tarification existant et réservé dans les possessions du Sultan de Zanzibar et dans la Colonie Portugaise de Mozambique.

M. le Président commence ensuite la lecture du Tarif.

A l'Article I^{er}, il fait remarquer que le régime des armes, comme celui des alcools, dont la Commission n'a pas à s'occuper, avait été l'objet des préoccupations de la Conférence, à raison des relations étroites du commerce des armes avec la Traite. La Conférence a adopté une série de mesures destinées à restreindre la circulation des armes, mais elle n'a pas établi de droits d'entrée sur cet Article. L'élaboration du Tarif fournit l'occasion de compléter l'Acte Général sur ce point. Bien que le commerce des armes touche à des intérêts qu'on a toutes raisons de ménager en Belgique, on n'a pas hésité à

frapper leur importation des droits les plus élevés, ainsi que celle des munitions et de la poudre. La raison d'humanité a primé toutes les autres.

M. Bourée, bien qu'il soit dépourvu d'instructions, croit pouvoir déclarer que son Gouvernement, considérant l'importation des armes en Afrique comme un fléau, acceptera la tarification la plus élevée.

M. le Président, répondant à une question de *Mr. Gosselin*, constate que les armes perfectionnées ne sont pas destinées à être mises dans le commerce. L'Acte Général ne permet pas que les armes perfectionnées deviennent un objet de commerce. Le port et l'usage en seront soumis à des autorisations spéciales; il y a donc lieu de s'entendre sur la question de savoir si des armes perfectionnées, introduites dans ces conditions, seront passibles du droit de 10 pour cent comme les armes à silex.

A propos de la taxation de l'article sel, et sur les observations présentées par MM. les Délégués de Portugal et d'Allemagne, MM. *Janssen*, *van Neuss*, et de *Chavannes* sont d'avis que le droit de 10 pour cent n'est pas exagéré: le sel, qui a une valeur intrinsèque minime—3 fr. 50 c. les 100 kilog.—atteint à l'intérieur, par suite du transport, le prix considérable de 3,000 fr. à 3,500 fr. la tonne. Il donne d'importants bénéfices; le droit de 10 pour cent au port d'importation, qui ne représente pas 10 pour cent à l'intérieur, est, du reste, inférieur à celui que fixent les Tarifs existant à la Côte Orientale et Occidentale d'Afrique.

M. le Président passe à l'article vins.

MM. *Bourée* et de *Chavannes* expriment l'opinion que tous les vins devraient être traités de la même façon, exception faite, si l'on veut, pour les vins mousseux, qui sont un article de luxe. Il paraît d'ailleurs inutile aux Délégués Français de taxer fortement les vins, l'importation n'en étant pas telle qu'elle doive être très productive.

M. Janssen maintient la nécessité de la distinction entre vins en bouteilles et vins en barils. Les droits proposés respectivement de 10 et 7 pour cent ne lui paraissent pas trop élevés. Si même le rendement de ces droits ne devait pas être considérable au début, il ne faut pas oublier que le Tarif est fait aussi en vue de l'avenir, et que les importations de vins tendront à s'accroître.

Abordant l'article verroteries, *M. le Président* constate que cette rubrique comprend les perles qui, dans certaines régions, servent de monnaie courante, et que les perles en métal rentrent dans la catégorie des ouvrages en métaux.

M. Bourée suggère d'appliquer à cet article le droit de 10 pour cent, en vigueur au Gabon.

M. Janssen dit que si la verroterie n'a pas été taxée plus haut, c'est parce qu'elle constitue surtout un article d'échange. Le corail a davantage le caractère d'un objet de luxe, mais son importation est peu considérable.

En ce qui concerne les conserves alimentaires, *M. Janssen* déclare que, dans sa pensée, cette rubrique ne comprend ni le riz, ni la farine, ni les biscuits de troupe; il ne faut y faire rentrer que les produits qui, destinés à l'alimentation, sont habituellement importés dans des boîtes, flacons ou baux hermétiquement fermés.

Plusieurs membres sont d'avis qu'il serait utile de donner une définition précise de ces produits, soit dans le Tarif même, soit dans des notes jointes au Tarif.

M. Bourée suggère de placer les conserves alimentaires, vins, bières, et sucres, tous objets de consommation, dans une seule catégorie et non pas de les traiter différemment, soit que l'on abaisse le droit sur les vins, soit que l'on augmente celui des trois autres articles.

M. Janssen estime que l'on pourrait adopter une taxe uniforme de 6 pour cent pour les conserves, le sucre, la bière, et les vins en barils, mais, quant aux vins en bouteilles, il ne serait pas équitable de réduire le droit; dans l'intérieur, en effet, les bouteilles, comme telles, acquièrent une grande valeur.

Après un échange d'observations avec *M. de Chavannes*, *M. le Délégué de l'État Indépendant du Congo* déclare qu'il n'entre pas dans les intentions de son Gouvernement de taxer séparément au port d'importation le vin et la bouteille, parce que celle-ci n'a guère de valeur à la côte. Il se réserve, d'ailleurs, de faire connaître ultérieurement la décision à laquelle son Gouvernement se sera arrêté sur ce point.

A l'article "quincaillerie," il est entendu que les "cauris," petits coquillages servant de monnaie dans certaines régions, sont compris dans cette dernière rubrique.

M. Janssen fait remarquer que le terme "ouvrage en fonte, en fer, en cuivre," &c., comprend les "mitakos," petites baguettes composées d'un alliage de cuivre et de zinc, et servant de monnaie, mais non les monnaies proprement dites, frappées et estampillées.

Le taux de 4 pour cent sur les ouvrages en bois ne soulève pas d'objections. Cette disposition ne comprend pas les bois simplement sciés, article qui intéresse parti-

culièrement le commerce Suédois et qui reste libre, pour faire droit aux observations présentées par M. Burenstam.

M. de Burenstam exprime sa reconnaissance, et l'intérêt qu'il attache à cette exception.

M. le Président donne lecture de la partie finale du projet de Tarif. Il fait observer que le dernier alinéa laisse une simple faculté d'établir le droit d'ailleurs modique de 3 pour cent à l'expiration des termes fixés pour l'exemption temporaire de certains articles, mais n'en impose pas l'obligation.

En ce qui concerne le matériel de chemin de fer, M. Janssen, répondant à Mr. Gosselin, déclare que, dans la pensée des auteurs du Tarif, l'exemption s'appliquerait aux chemins de fer à construire dans tout le bassin conventionnel.

Une note insérée à la fin du Tarif réserve à la Commission la faculté de convertir certains droits *ad valorem* en droits spécifiques, Mr. Gosselin rappelle à ce sujet que le Gouvernement Britannique a toujours considéré les droits *ad valorem* comme préférables.

La séance est levée.

Le Président,
(Signé) Baron LAMBERMONT.

Les Secrétaires,
(Signé) L. ARENDT.
A DE CUVELIER.
CH. SEEGER.

Annexe.

DROITS D'ENTRÉE.—PROJET DE TARIF.

Marchandises.	Taux du Droit <i>ad valorem</i> .*
Armes, poudre à tirer, et munitions pour armes à feu	10 pour cent.
Sel	
Vins en bouteilles	
Vins en barils	7 "
Verreries (y compris perles, corail)	6 "
Tissus et habillements	5 "
Conserves alimentaires	
Bières	
Sucre	4 "
Verreries, faïence, et porcelaine	
Quincaillerie (y compris coquillages)	
Ouvrages en fonte, en fer, en acier, en cuivre, en ploumb, en zinc, et en étain (comprenant les métaux à l'état de plaques, de feuilles, de barres ou de fils)	4 "
Ouvrages en bois (non compris les bois simplement sciés) ..	

Les marchandises non indiquées au Tarif qui précède sont exemptes de droits.

Peuvent également être importés en exemption de droits :—

- (a.) Les navires et bateaux ;
- (b.) Les machines à vapeur, les appareils mécaniques servant à l'industrie ou à l'agriculture et les outils d'un usage industriel et agricole (pendant une période de quatre ans prenant cours le jour de l'application des droits).
2. Les locomotives, voitures, et matériel de chemin de fer (pendant la période de construction des lignes et jusqu'au jour de l'exploitation).
3. Les instruments de science et de précision ainsi que les objets servant au culte.
4. Les effets d'habillement et bagages à l'usage personnel des voyageurs et des personnes qui viennent s'établir sur le territoire de l'État Indépendant.

L'admission de ces marchandises en franchise est soumise aux mesures de contrôle jugées nécessaires pour empêcher les abus.

Les articles compris sous les Nos. 1 et 2, et à l'expiration des termes y indiqués, pourront être soumis à un droit d'entrée de 3 pour cent.

* La Commission Technique pourra, quant à certaines marchandises, convertir les droits *ad valorem* proposés en droits spécifiques produisant le même revenu, si cette dernière forme de tarification paraît plus avantageuse pour le commerce.

Inclosure 2 in No. 249.

Minutes of Sitting of November 13, 1890.

Étaient présents :

M. le Baron Lambermont, Président ; M. le Comte d'Alvensleben ; M. Göhring ; M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch ; M. Émile Banning ; M. Gutierrez de Agüera ; M. Janssen ; M. van Neuss ; Mr. E. H. Terrell ; M. Bourée ; M. de Chavannes ; Sir John Kirk ; Mr. Gosselin ; M. le Chevalier Bardi ; M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen ; M. le Comte de Macedo ; M. A. de Castilho ; M. le Prince Ouroussoff ; M. de Burenstam ; Carathéodory Effendi.

Assistaient également à la séance : Lord Vivian et M. van Maldeghem.

M. le Président rappelle que, dans sa dernière séance, la Commission a été arrêtée par une divergence d'opinions, relative à deux questions de principe. Il ajoute que si des Délégués ont des communications à faire à la Commission, l'assemblée leur saura gré de vouloir bien lui en donner connaissance.

Sir John Kirk prie son collègue Mr. Gosselin de donner lecture de la déclaration suivante :—

“ Le Gouvernement de la Reine a pris en considération la proposition faite lors de la dernière séance de la Commission Technique, d'après laquelle le projet de Tarif serait scindé en deux parties, dont l'une serait applicable aux territoires compris dans la partie orientale du bassin conventionnel du Congo et l'autre aux territoires compris dans la partie occidentale du même bassin, en tant que ces territoires sont visés par l'Acte de Berlin.

“ Ces deux Tarifs seraient élaborés dans la limite de 10 pour cent *ad valorem* par les Puissances territoriales directement intéressées, cette limite étant sanctionnée par la Déclaration du 2 Juillet dernier, annexée à l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles.

“ Les Délégués Britanniques sont autorisés par le Gouvernement de la Reine à se rallier à cette proposition aux conditions suivantes :—

“ 1. Qu'il serait nettement entendu que des mesures efficaces seraient prises contre l'introduction soit directement, soit indirectement, de tout traitement différentiel : sous ce rapport, le Gouvernement de la Reine maintient que les privilèges consacrés dans l'Acte de Berlin ne sauraient être ni abandonnés, ni affaiblis.

“ 2. Le Gouvernement de la Reine est également d'avis qu'il est essentiel que les nouveaux Tarifs soient soumis, dans tous leurs détails, à la considération et à la sanction de la Commission Plénière.”

M. Bourée dit qu'avant l'arrivée des instructions très précises qui viennent de lui être adressées, il n'a pu faire part à ses collègues que de ses impressions personnelles. Il rappelle qu'au début, étant encore dans l'ignorance des termes formels de ces instructions, sachant seulement que le Gouvernement Français désirait une entente sur le Tarif avec les États qui sont ses voisins à l'embouchure du Congo, il avait suggéré l'idée de scinder le Tarif et avait envisagé la création de deux régimes distincts pour la Côte Orientale et la Côte Occidentale.

Cette combinaison lui paraissait rentrer d'autant mieux dans les vues du Cabinet de Paris que, dans sa pensée, les trois États en présence à la Côte Occidentale seraient naturellement amenés à établir leur Tarif à la suite d'une entente réciproque. Les instructions que M. Bourée a reçues admettent le système qu'il avait suggéré pour autant que le Tarif de la Côte Occidentale soit débattu entre les trois États du Congo. M. le Ministre de France est heureux d'apprendre que le Gouvernement Britannique, de son côté, ne fait pas d'objection à la division du bassin conventionnel. C'est un premier résultat. Mais la déclaration lue par Mr. Gosselin y apporte deux conditions. La première, c'est que des mesures efficaces soient prises pour prévenir l'établissement de droits différentiels. M. Bourée a déjà dit qu'il ne pouvait supposer que soit directement, soit indirectement, son Gouvernement ait la pensée d'établir de semblables droits. Un tel arrangement serait inacceptable.

Le seul point sur lequel il doit faire des réserves, déjà émises par lui, porte sur la seconde condition. Le Gouvernement Britannique demande que le nouveau Tarif soit soumis dans tous ses détails à la sanction de la Commission. Ceci aurait pour conséquence d'entamer la complète liberté de tarification que le Gouvernement Français entend conserver.

L'élaboration du Tarif des droits d'entrée dans la limite du maximum de 10 pour cent constitue une mesure d'exécution du principe arrêté par la Conférence. A cet égard, le Gouvernement Français, comme il l'a fait chaque fois que, dans la Conférence, il s'est agi de questions de principes, veut maintenir ses prérogatives souveraines et ne pourra se prêter à une modification de sa manière de voir. Dès l'origine, il a été très affirmatif sur ce point. Il désire donc que la liberté de tarification existe pour tout le monde, sauf à s'entendre entre voisins, afin de se conformer aux Résolutions de la Conférence et d'assurer le rendement du droit qu'on se propose d'établir. Il va de soi qu'un des voisins ne pourrait ouvrir la porte à des produits qui seraient frappés chez l'autre. Mais il importe de réduire l'entente à ce qui est strictement nécessaire en vue de régulariser la perception des droits nouveaux et de fournir à l'État Indépendant du Congo les ressources dont il a besoin pour satisfaire aux obligations qui lui sont imposées. Tel est le vœu du Gouvernement Français. Dès lors, il est peu probable qu'on accepte à Paris la seconde condition que réclament les Délégués Britanniques. M. Bourée demande si ces derniers ne pourraient se départir de ce que cette condition présente de trop rigoureux et d'inacceptable pour son Gouvernement.

Sir John Kirk répond que les instructions des Délégués Britanniques sont très précises et très claires sur ce point, et il ne croit pas qu'elles puissent être modifiées.

Actuellement personne n'a le droit de tarifer à son gré dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo. La faculté d'établir un droit d'entrée est une concession faite par la Conférence ; elle ne pourrait pas s'étendre au delà des limites que tracent l'Acte Général et la Déclaration.

M. Bourée reconnaît qu'aux termes de l'Acte Général de Berlin, les Puissances n'ont pas le droit de tarifer dans cette région. Aujourd'hui, tous les Gouvernements représentés sont d'accord pour supprimer cette stipulation. Mais il y a lieu de remarquer que, dans toutes les questions de principe arrêtées par la Conférence, on a toujours réservé pour chaque Gouvernement la liberté de prendre les mesures d'exécution qu'il jugerait les plus convenables. Lorsqu'il s'est agi de la réglementation du trafic des alcools, par exemple, on s'est borné à poser le principe en laissant à chaque Puissance le soin d'en régler l'application.

Il en est de même ici : la Déclaration établit le principe de la perception des droits d'entrée dans la limite de 10 pour cent, mais chacun doit pouvoir l'appliquer suivant les besoins de son administration et les exigences de sa situation particulière. Ainsi, dans le Congo Français, traversé par la ligne séparative du bassin conventionnel, on se heurtera à de grandes difficultés : il faudra nécessairement maintenir une certaine corrélation entre les régimes applicables aux régions situées au-dessus et au-dessous de cette ligne. Ces considérations ne permettent pas au Gouvernement Français de se lier indéfiniment en adoptant des chiffres qui seraient appropriés à la situation présente, mais pourraient ne plus convenir dans la suite. Faudrait-il, dans ce dernier cas, réunir une nouvelle Commission ? Ce serait là une procédure très compliquée.

M. Bourée ajoute que les Délégués Français attacheraient un grand prix à ce que l'on ne fit pas de cette question une condition absolue de l'entente qui est recherchée.

Lord Vivian dit que le Gouvernement Britannique, après avoir toujours maintenu au sein de la Conférence la nécessité d'un Tarif commun, a fait une grande concession en se ralliant à l'idée de scinder le Tarif. Son Excellence rappelle à M. Bourée que, dès le premier moment où la question des droits d'entrée a été soulevée, les Plénipotentiaires Anglais ont tenu à constater qu'il ne pourrait y avoir dans les nouveaux arrangements ni traitement différentiel, ni aucune atteinte à la liberté du transit. Le Gouvernement de la Reine a reconnu qu'il est impérieusement nécessaire de procurer à l'État Indépendant du Congo les ressources dont il a besoin pour faire face aux obligations que lui impose l'Acte Général. Mais, dans sa pensée première, il voulait limiter la faculté d'établir un droit d'entrée dans le bassin conventionnel au seul État qui en avait adressé la demande à la Conférence. Ses Plénipotentiaires lui ayant fait observer qu'il serait impossible de limiter la perception des droits d'entrée à cet État, le Gouvernement Britannique ne consentit à étendre au bassin conventionnel tout entier la dérogation à la liberté d'importation, qu'en réservant le maintien des grands principes d'égalité de traitement et de liberté de transit qui ont inspiré l'Acte de Berlin. Les Plénipotentiaires Anglais ont donc insisté pour que des garanties fussent données sur ce point et c'est à ces fins que la Commission actuelle a été instituée. Mais quelle serait l'utilité de cette Commission si elle ne pouvait examiner en détail les Tarifs qu'il s'agit d'établir ? Si l'on n'avait réellement pas l'intention de comprendre cet objet dans son mandat, il aurait suffi de dire, comme l'a fait la Déclaration du 2 Juillet, que chaque Puissance pourrait tarifer dans la limite de 10 pour cent.

Telle est l'opinion du Gouvernement Anglais.

M. Bourée répond que le Gouvernement Français ne désire nullement revenir sur

l'interdiction des droits différentiels et sur le principe de la liberté du transit, stipulés par le Traité de Berlin. Son Excellence craint qu'il n'y ait un malentendu dans l'interprétation du terme de "droits différentiels." Le Gouvernement Français n'a pas l'intention d'établir de semblables droits dans la partie de ses possessions comprise dans le bassin conventionnel, c'est-à-dire d'y revendiquer la faculté de percevoir, à l'importation, des droits différents selon la provenance des marchandises.

Jamais il n'a entendu introduire dans ses possessions du Congo un régime douanier qui ne serait pas conforme aux principes que M. le Ministre d'Angleterre vient de rappeler.

Mais il pourrait être amené à y établir des droits qui ne seraient pas identiques à ceux qui existeraient dans des possessions voisines. De même, les taxes perçues dans l'Etat Indépendant pourraient être différentes de celles que le Gouvernement Portugais aurait édictées pour sa Colonie du Congo; il n'y aura pas de droits différentiels dans chacun de ces Etats, mais il pourrait y avoir des différences de Tarifs entre eux. Dans la pratique, toutefois, il sera nécessaire que les Etats composant le groupe occidental se concertent, afin que les Tarifs, fussent-ils même différents, répondent aux convenances réciproques.

Mr. Gosselin dit qu'il avait compris que le Tarif devait être commun pour tous les Etats d'un même groupe.

M. Bourée répond qu'il pourrait y avoir des différences de Tarifs qui seraient concertées entre eux, sans que pour cela il y eut un régime différentiel.

Le Gouvernement Français entend respecter les principes du Traité de Berlin, mais il insiste sur la distinction entre le système qui permet les droits différentiels dans un Etat et celui qui admet des droits variant d'un Etat à un autre. Ce sont deux ordres d'idées absolument différents.

Quant à la question posée par Lord Vivian, à savoir quel sera le rôle de la Commission, *M. Bourée* répond que son mandat sera précisément d'élucider la question de principe laissée en suspens par la Déclaration du 2 Juillet. *M. le Ministre d'Angleterre* a pris soin de rappeler qu'il avait fait dans la Conférence ses réserves sur ce point, mais, à ce moment, craignant que la divergence d'opinions qui s'était manifestée ne retardât le signature de l'Acte Général, il avait lui-même proposé une rédaction transactionnelle qui permit à la Commission d'examiner cette question plus tard.

Lord Vivian rappelle le texte de la déclaration faite par les Plénipotentiaires Britanniques avant la signature de l'Acte Général du 2 Juillet. Il en résulte que les conditions du Tarif devaient être fixées par une négociation à ouvrir après la signature de l'Acte Général. Son Excellence s'était exprimée dans les termes suivants:—

"Les délibérations de la Conférence ayant établi que la taxe autorisée par la déclaration financière a exclusivement pour but de fournir les moyens nécessaires pour faire face aux dépenses imposées par l'Acte Général afin d'arrêter la Traite des Nègres, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine, en vue des grands intérêts en jeu, et tenant compte de la clause figurant dans la déclaration du 21 Juin, et d'après laquelle les conditions du Tarif doivent être fixées par une négociation à ouvrir immédiatement après la signature de l'Acte Général, ne veut pas se séparer de l'ensemble des Puissances et nous a autorisés, en conséquence, à signer l'Acte Général et la Déclaration."

M. Bourée répond que c'est précisément cette négociation qui se poursuit actuellement. Le passage de la déclaration Anglaise que vient de relire *M. le Ministre d'Angleterre* n'impliquait que la manière de voir du Gouvernement Britannique, et non une réserve formelle.

Sir John Kirk fait remarquer qu'il s'agissait non pas d'une appréciation, mais d'une condition mise par le Gouvernement Britannique à la signature.

M. Bourée rappelle qu'il avait été chargé également de réserver l'acceptation d'un Tarif Général par son Gouvernement; c'est pour éviter une discussion qui aurait eu pour conséquence de compromettre le sort de l'Acte Général qu'il a proposé une rédaction qui ajournait la solution de la difficulté.

M. le Président dit qu'aussi longtemps que le Traité de Berlin restera en vigueur, il sera impossible de porter atteinte aux principes qui interdisent de créer un régime différentiel ou de violer la liberté du transit. Quel que soit le Tarif qui sera établi, il devra être exclusif de tout privilège.

M. le Président constate, au surplus, qu'un pas a été fait dans la voie de l'entente. En effet, il reste acquis qu'en raison de la diversité des conditions géographiques et économiques des deux régions du bassin conventionnel, la Commission admet un régime douanier différent pour chacune d'elles, dans la limite de 10 pour cent de la valeur des marchandises importées.

Toutefois, cette idée, suggérée par les Délégués Français, ayant été adoptée par les Délégués Britanniques, il y aurait intérêt à savoir si d'autres Puissances ont des communications à faire à ce sujet.

M. le Comte de Macedo dit que le Gouvernement Portugais, modifiant ses instructions antérieures dans un esprit de conciliation, assigne comme mandat à la Commission de déterminer les marchandises qui seront affranchies de tout droit d'entrée dans la partie du bassin conventionnel du Congo qui tombe sous l'application de l'Article IV de l'Acte Général de Berlin; elle fixerait en outre un maximum variable pour les différentes catégories de marchandises indiquées dans le projet de Tarif soumis à la Commission par l'État Indépendant du Congo. En faisant cette proposition, le Gouvernement Portugais est inspiré par le désir de rallier toutes les Puissances à une formule acceptable pour toutes.

M. le Comte de Macedo ajoute que ses instructions lui permettent de répondre à *M. le Ministre d'Angleterre*. Mais il désire, avant tout, établir bien nettement la distinction qu'il y a lieu, suivant lui, de faire entre le traitement différentiel direct qu'avait en vue le Traité de Berlin et le traitement différentiel indirect dont il a été question au sein de la Commission.

Le premier consiste dans l'application d'un droit différent à la même marchandise, suivant sa provenance; le second, dans l'établissement des taxes les moins élevées pour les produits nationaux.

Le Gouvernement Portugais, tout en admettant pour chaque Puissance une certaine liberté quant à la tarification dans la limite du maximum, déclare qu'il n'entend user lui-même de cette liberté ni en ce qui concerne le traitement différentiel direct, ni en ce qui concerne le traitement différentiel indirect. Il donne ainsi satisfaction, dans une certaine mesure, à l'une des conditions mises par les Délégués Britanniques, à leur adhésion au dédoublement du Tarif.

Lord Vivian demande à savoir s'il est bien dans la pensée de la Commission qu'en modifiant l'Article IV de l'Acte Général de Berlin on n'entend pas aller au delà de ce qui est nécessaire pour procurer à l'État du Congo les ressources dont il a besoin, et qu'on ne portera pas atteinte aux deux autres principes, garantis par le même Traité, c'est-à-dire, l'égalité de traitement et la liberté de transit.

M. le Président répond que sur ce point il ne peut subsister le moindre doute. La contribution à lever sous forme de droit d'entrée, et par dérogation à l'Article IV de l'Acte de Berlin a un objet précis: elle doit procurer à l'État du Congo les ressources qui lui sont nécessaires dans la limite des exigences auxquelles il doit faire face. On n'a pas voulu au delà. Mais en formulant le régime qui naîtra de cette dérogation au Traité de Berlin, il a été entendu qu'on le ferait sans porter aucune atteinte aux garanties qui sont relatives à l'interdiction de tout régime différentiel et à la liberté du transit. Cela résulte, d'ailleurs, des termes mêmes de la Déclaration du 2 Juillet.

Quant à la distinction faite par *M. le Ministre de Portugal* entre le régime différentiel direct et le régime différentiel indirect, *M. le Président* est d'avis qu'on sortirait de l'esprit de l'Acte Général de Berlin et de la Déclaration du 2 Juillet si l'on usait de la latitude laissée par cette dernière pour enfreindre l'égalité de traitement qui était dans la pensée de la Conférence de Berlin. On n'interpréterait pas fidèlement cette pensée si, dans un but de concurrence, on dégrèverait certains produits en surélevant la taxe pour les autres.

Les faits et dispositions qui viennent d'être rappelés paraissent avoir, dans leur ensemble, un caractère rassurant au regard de la première des conditions mises par le Gouvernement Britannique à l'adoption de deux Tarifs pour le bassin conventionnel.

M. le Président demande à MM. les Délégués du Congo s'ils seraient en mesure de faire connaître leur avis sur la question du Tarif divisé.

M. Janssen dit que les Délégués de l'État du Congo ont reçu du Roi-Souverain l'ordre de déclarer à la Commission que leur Gouvernement ne s'oppose pas à l'établissement de deux Tarifs différents, l'un pour la Côte Orientale, l'autre pour la Côte Occidentale.

En ce qui concerne le Tarif lui-même, l'État du Congo a toujours eu en vue un Tarif commun. Étant le premier intéressé dans la question financière, il a, en communiquant aux Puissances son projet, voulu montrer qu'avec un Tarif modéré il croyait pouvoir trouver les ressources suffisantes pour exécuter les Résolutions de la Conférence. C'est donc dans ce but qu'il a préparé un projet de Tarif très réduit, pensant que les États voisins pourraient l'accepter à leur tour.

Toutefois, les Délégués de l'État Indépendant sont prêts, sous réserve de l'approbation du Roi-Souverain, à entrer dans toute combinaison qui serait de nature à amener un Tarif commun entre les trois États ayant à la Côte Occidentale des possessions dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo.

M. le Président invite les Représentants des Puissances qui, avec la Grande-Bretagne, ont des possessions à la Côte Orientale, à vouloir bien se prononcer à leur tour sur la question du Tarif par zone.

M. le Comte d'Alvensleben dit que le Gouvernement Impérial, qui avait soutenu d'abord la nécessité d'un Tarif commun, a autorisé ses Représentants à suivre les délibé-

rations, et à prendre la question en considération, sauf toutefois à soumettre à l'approbation de la Commission les deux Tarifs qui auront été adoptés.

M. le Chevalier Bardi n'a pas encore d'instructions précises sur ce point, mais il est autorisé à prendre part aux délibérations.

M. le Président conclut que le système de la division du Tarif par zone est généralement accepté.

La question se présente actuellement de savoir comment le double Tarif sera préparé.

D'après les explications de *M. le Ministre de France*, le Tarif de la Côte Occidentale serait l'œuvre commune des trois États ayant des possessions dans cette partie du bassin conventionnel. La même règle serait-elle établie pour l'élaboration des Tarifs applicables à la Côte Orientale ?

Enfin, cette double élaboration ne pourrait-elle être entreprise dès maintenant par des Sous-Comités, en réservant la question de savoir si le résultat devra être soumis à la Commission Plénière ?

M. le Comte de Macedo demande si, dans la pensée de *M. Bourée*, l'on devra aboutir à un Tarif commun aux trois États voisins, ou si chacun d'eux devra conserver son indépendance en fait de tarification.

M. Bourée répond qu'il a voulu préconiser la possibilité d'un accord entre les Puissances intéressées, dans le but de s'entendre sur un Tarif qui ne leur serait pas nécessairement commun. Comme l'a expliqué *M. le Comte de Macedo*, une égalité apparente pourrait conduire en réalité à des inégalités absolues. En raison de ce fait, il serait préférable que les Puissances intéressées recherchent une entente qui permettrait à chacune d'elles d'établir un Tarif qui lui serait propre. Des différences pourraient se produire entre ces Tarifs, mais elles seraient admises de commun accord.

Cette procédure ne soulèverait pas de difficultés, sauf s'il fallait en soumettre le résultat à l'approbation de la Commission. *M. le Président* semble supposer ce dernier point résolu, lorsqu'il demande comment s'élaboreront les Tarifs.

Carathéodory Effendi demande quel est le rôle réservé à la Commission. En disant qu'une négociation serait ouverte à l'effet d'arrêter les conditions du régime douanier, la Déclaration du 2 Juillet entendait évidemment que la Commission eût à prendre part à l'élaboration générale du Tarif, qu'il fût uniforme, double, ou triple.

M. Bourée rappelle qu'il a déjà répondu à cette question posée par *Lord Vivian*. Lorsque la Conférence a substitué aux mots de la Déclaration "les bases d'un Tarif commun" ceux de "les conditions du régime douanier à instituer," elle voulait ajourner certaines difficultés qui eussent risqué de retarder la signature de l'Acte Général. Ce sont précisément ces questions réservées que la Commission a le mandat de résoudre.

Carathéodory Effendi insiste sur la nécessité qu'il y aurait de préciser, avant tout, le mandat et la compétence de la Commission. Si l'on abandonne aux Puissances intéressées le soin de régler entre elles leurs Tarifs, il est bien évident pour lui que les arrangements qui sortiraient de semblables délibérations devraient être soumis à la Commission ou au moins enregistrés et homologués par elle.

M. Bourée fait remarquer que la question de savoir si la Commission aurait à intervenir pour examiner les Tarifs ainsi convenus a été précisément réservée par *M. le Président*, et qu'il ne s'agit pour le moment que de décider comment les Tarifs seront élaborés.

Carathéodory Effendi estime que la Commission pourrait nommer immédiatement des Sous-Comités. Son Excellence fait observer qu'il n'y a pas de temps à perdre, et qu'il serait désirable de terminer les travaux de l'assemblée le plus tôt possible, l'Acte Général devant être signé par toutes les Puissances au 2 Janvier prochain.

M. le Président constate que l'on s'est mis d'accord pour admettre une distinction entre les zones occidentale et orientale. Ce point acquis, on est conduit en quelque sorte symétriquement à se demander comment se feront ces Tarifs pour les deux côtes.

Lord Vivian accepte la déclaration précise faite par *M. le Comte d'Alvensleben*. Comme les Délégués Allemands, les Délégués Britanniques sont prêts à entrer en arrangement avec les Puissances intéressées à la Côte Orientale en vue d'élaborer un Tarif dans les limites de la Déclaration du 2 Juillet, et ils se déclarent prêts à soumettre ce Tarif à la sanction de la Commission Plénière.

M. Bourée désire faire remarquer que les conditions différentes dans lesquelles on se trouve aux deux côtes opposées ont amené l'idée de Tarifs différents ; de même, la procédure admise pour l'élaboration des Tarifs à la Côte Orientale ne doit pas être un précédent pour celle que l'on suivra en ce qui concerne la Côte Occidentale.

M. le Président considérant que les Délégués Britanniques sont prêts à entrer en

arrangement pour élaborer un projet de Tarifs à la Côte Orientale, ajoute qu'il faut en outre que ce projet prenne corps, et propose que les Délégués Britanniques se constituent, avec ceux des autres Puissances intéressées, en Sous-Comité chargé de la préparation du projet.

M. Bourée dit que la nécessité de maintenir intégralement le principe de l'indépendance des États ne lui permet pas de se rallier sans réserve à la proposition d'établir des Sous-Comités.

M. le Président rappelle que la question de savoir si le travail qui sortira des négociations entre les Puissances intéressées sera subordonné à l'approbation de la Commission a été réservée.

M. Bourée suggère l'avis qu'on pourrait commencer par la Côte Orientale, sans s'occuper déjà de la Côte Occidentale.

M. le Comte d'Alvensleben et *M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch* ne se rallient pas à cette manière de voir, le mandat de la Commission s'étendant à tout le bassin conventionnel ; en combinant les efforts de tous les membres de la Commission on pourrait peut-être même arriver à s'entendre sur un seul Tarif commun.

M. Bourée, à ce propos, demande à *M. le Comte d'Alvensleben* s'il accepterait, pour la Côte Orientale, le Tarif proposé par l'État du Congo.

M. le Comte d'Alvensleben n'y verrait pas d'objection.

M. le Président fait remarquer qu'en effet ce projet n'a soulevé aucune opposition et qu'il répond au double but auquel le Tarif à élaborer doit donner satisfaction.

M. Bourée ne peut se rallier immédiatement à la proposition de constituer des Sous-Comités. Il ne sait pas si son Gouvernement voudrait participer à un Sous-Comité de ce genre ou s'il ne préférerait pas traiter de Cabinet à Cabinet. Il demandera des instructions.

M. le Président fait des vœux pour que le Gouvernement Français adopte la première voie, à cause des lenteurs qu'entraîneraient des négociations diplomatiques et du court délai qui sépare le moment actuel du 2 Janvier.

Répondant à une question de *Mr. Gosselin*, *M. le Président* dit que les Délégués ont à demander à leurs Gouvernements s'ils se rallient à la proposition de faire nommer par la Commission deux Sous-Comités qui rechercheraient les conditions du Tarif à établir, l'un pour la Côte Orientale, l'autre pour la Côte Occidentale ; ces Comités seraient composés des Délégués des Puissances qui ont respectivement des possessions à ces deux côtes, et sous réserve de la question de savoir si les Tarifs seront soumis ou non à l'approbation de la Commission Plénière.

Mr. Gosselin dit que, dans l'état de leurs instructions, les Délégués Britanniques ne pourraient prendre part aux délibérations d'un Sous-Comité, sans que la question de principe fût tranchée.

Lord Vivian fait remarquer que plusieurs Puissances, telles que la Belgique et les Pays-Bas, ayant des intérêts commerciaux importants dans ces régions, ne seraient pas représentées dans les Sous-Comités.

L'assemblée émet l'avis que, conformément aux précédents posés par la Conférence, les Représentants des autres Puissances auront la faculté d'assister dans les mêmes conditions aux travaux des Sous-Comités.

M. Bourée, connaissant le vif désir de son Gouvernement de voir les Pays-Bas s'associer à l'œuvre commune, est persuadé qu'il verrait avec plaisir le Gouvernement Néerlandais mis à même de faire entendre sa voix et de faire entrer en ligne de compte ses intérêts dans les arrangements futurs.

M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen demandera des instructions.

Mr. Gosselin désirerait savoir s'il faut en référer au sujet de la proposition de *M. le Comte de Macedo*.

M. le Comte de Macedo rappelle que son Gouvernement, dans un esprit de conciliation, a proposé de faire déterminer par la Commission les marchandises qui entreraient en franchise, et, pour les autres, de fixer des maxima variables des droits.

M. le Président pense que les Sous-Comités pourront s'occuper de ces questions.

La Commission fixe sa prochaine séance au Mardi, 18 Novembre, afin que les Délégués aient le temps de recevoir les instructions de leurs Gouvernements sur les propositions faites au cours de la séance en vue de tracer la marche ultérieure des travaux de la Commission.

La séance est levée.

Le Président,
(Signé) Baron LAMBERMONT.

Les Secrétaires,
(Signé) L. ARENDT.
A. DE CUVELIER.
CH. SEEGER.

Inclosure 3 in No. 249.

Minutes of Sitting of November 18, 1890.

Étaient présents :

M. le Baron Lambermont, Président ; M. le Comte d'Alvensleben ; M. Göhring ; M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch ; M. Émile Banning ; M. Gutierrez de Agüera ; M. Janssen ; M. van Neuss ; Mr. E. H. Terrell ; M. Bourée ; M. de Chavannes ; Sir John Kirk ; Mr. Gosselin ; M. le Chevalier Bardi ; M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen ; M. le Comte de Macedo ; M. A. de Castilho ; M. de Burenstam.

Assistait également à la séance : Lord Vivian.

M. le Président dit que dans la dernière séance il a été entendu que quelques-uns des Délégués demanderaient à leur Gouvernement des instructions sur certains points réservés. Il donne la parole à MM. les Délégués Britanniques, qui étaient dans ce cas.

Mr. Gosselin, au nom des Délégués Britanniques, donne lecture de la déclaration suivante :—

“ Nous avons déjà fait savoir, lors de la dernière séance de la Commission, que nous sommes autorisés à nous rallier à la proposition de scinder le bassin conventionnel du Congo en deux zones.

“ Nous sommes à même aujourd'hui de déclarer que nos instructions nous permettent d'accepter, en principe, la nomination de deux Sous-Comités, sous les mêmes réserves, quant aux détails, que celles que nous avons déjà eu l'honneur d'exposer à la Commission.

“ Nous sommes donc prêts à prendre part, dès maintenant, aux travaux du Sous-Comité chargé d'élaborer le Tarif pour la Côte Orientale, tout en maintenant nos réserves quant à la question de principe.”

M. Göhring annonce que les Délégués Allemands sont prêts également à se réunir aux Délégués des autres Puissances intéressées pour élaborer le Tarif applicable à la Côte Orientale. Il propose de commencer sans délai les délibérations en vue de se mettre d'accord sur le projet à soumettre aux Gouvernements qui doivent l'approuver.

M. le Chevalier Bardi est disposé à se joindre aux Délégués des Puissances ayant des possessions à la Côte Orientale.

M. Bourée demande si le Gouvernement de la Reine, en consentant à la constitution de deux Sous-Comités, n'entend faire partie de l'un qu'à la condition que tous deux soient institués ; si, en d'autres termes, les Délégués Britanniques, en donnant leur assentiment à la formation d'un Sous-Comité pour le Tarif à la Côte Orientale, le subordonnent à la création d'un Sous-Comité pour le Tarif à la Côte Occidentale. M. Bourée rattache cette question à une réserve qu'il a faite dans une séance précédente, lorsqu'il demandait que, vu les conditions différentes dans lesquelles se trouvent les deux côtes, la procédure admise pour la Côte Orientale ne servît pas de précédent pour ce que l'on ferait à la Côte Occidentale.

MM. les Délégués Britanniques répondent que tout en se ralliant à la proposition de prendre part au Sous-Comité, ils tiennent à constater bien clairement qu'à leur avis aucun Rapport ne serait rédigé jusqu'à ce que les Puissances qui ont des intérêts sur la Côte Occidentale eussent également donné leur consentement à ce que les Tarifs à appliquer dans cette partie de la zone soient soumis à la Commission Plénière.

M. Bourée croit devoir néanmoins maintenir ses réserves précédentes. Il a voulu seulement, par sa demande, réserver la liberté d'action que le Gouvernement Français revendique tout entière en ce qui le concerne à la Côte Occidentale. Les instructions qu'il a reçues sont formelles et précises, et ne prêtent à aucune élasticité d'interprétation : elles l'obligent à maintenir les vues déjà manifestées par le Gouvernement Français, qui réclame pour chacun la liberté de tarifier à son gré à la Côte Occidentale, sauf à s'entendre avec ses voisins, et, cela va de soi, dans la limite des 10 pour cent.

M. Bourée ajoute qu'il n'est pas en état de déclarer que les résultats de l'entente éventuelle des trois Puissances du Congo seront soumis à l'approbation de la Commission, et qu'il n'est pas davantage autorisé à entrer dans une Sous-Commission, le Gouvernement de la République ayant voulu se réserver un accord direct de Cabinet à Cabinet.

M. le Président, sans rien préjuger ni rien accepter, en vue seulement d'éclairer la Commission, demande à M. Bourée s'il ne serait pas en mesure de donner quelques explications sur la manière dont fonctionnerait cette procédure de Gouvernement à Gouvernement.

M. Bourée entrevoit plusieurs modalités applicables à la procédure que propose le Gouvernement Français ; mais en présence du laconisme de ses instructions, il ne lui est pas possible de donner actuellement d'autres éclaircissements sur le mode d'exécution qui aurait les préférences de son Gouvernement. Il demandera des renseignements complémentaires.

Lord Vivian dit que deux Puissances, sans posséder aucun territoire en Afrique, représentent au sein de la Commission des intérêts commerciaux considérables : ce sont les Pays-Bas et les États-Unis ; leur adhésion à ce que décidera la Commission est indispensable. Il demande à *M. le Délégué des États-Unis* si la manière de procéder, préconisée par *M. Bourée*, donnera satisfaction à son Gouvernement.

Mr. Terrell, bien qu'il soit délégué à titre officieux seulement, croit, à raison de l'importance capitale que la question présente pour son Gouvernement, devoir faire quelques remarques. Le Gouvernement des États-Unis n'a pas fait objection à ce que son Délégué assistât à la discussion des Tarifs, qu'il veut simples, uniformes, et parfaitement équitables pour tous les pays commerçants du monde. Il considère que le meilleur moyen d'atteindre ce résultat est l'élaboration d'un Tarif commun pour les pays de la Côte Orientale, d'un autre Tarif commun pour ceux de la Côte Occidentale ; il pense également que le mode le plus pratique d'établir ces deux Tarifs est la création de deux Sous-Comités chargés de les formuler, l'examen final du travail de chaque Sous-Comité devant appartenir à la Commission elle-même. *M. le Délégué des États-Unis* se rallie en conséquence aux vues de ses collègues de la Grande-Bretagne et se prononce pour l'institution de deux Sous-Comités, composés des Délégués des Puissances intéressées, et chargées d'élaborer les deux Tarifs qui seraient révisés en dernier ressort par l'ensemble de la Commission.

M. le Président conclut de la situation, telle qu'elle se présente actuellement—MM. les Délégués Français proposant de régler le Tarif de la Côte Occidentale par des négociations entre Cabinets—que plusieurs des Délégués devront demander les instructions nécessaires pour se prononcer sur le dernier mode suggéré. Il se voit obligé de remettre à une autre séance les délibérations à ce sujet. D'ici là il pourra intervenir entre les membres de l'assemblée ou entre les Gouvernements des échanges de vues qui éclaireraient la voie à suivre.

Il pense que le Sous-Comité pour l'élaboration du Tarif à la Côte Orientale pourrait utilement commencer ses travaux dans les conditions indiquées par MM. les Délégués Britanniques.

M. le Président ayant demandé si aucun autre Délégué n'a de communication à faire, *M. le Comte Macedo* déclare qu'il n'a pas reçu d'instructions spéciales sur les points qui ont été soulevés à la séance précédente. Mais rien, dans ses instructions antérieures, ne l'empêche d'assister, sous réserve de la question de principe, à l'élaboration du Tarif pour la Côte Occidentale.

M. Janssen rappelle que les Délégués de l'État du Congo n'ont pas d'objection à participer au travail d'un Sous-Comité pour la Côte Occidentale.

M. Banning désire savoir si les Puissances de la Côte Orientale entreraient dans le Sous-Comité avec la pensée d'arriver à un Tarif commun.

M. Bourée répond que cette question a été réservée.

M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch demande si le Sous-Comité pour la Côte Orientale devra être considéré comme investi d'un mandat de la Commission, ou s'il ne constituera qu'une simple réunion des Délégués des Puissances intéressées, en dehors de toute délégation officielle.

Sir John Kirk répond que le Sous-Comité reçoit mandat de la Commission, et que tous les membres de celle-ci pourront assister aux délibérations.

M. Bourée est d'avis que si la question posée par *M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch* est résolue affirmativement, tous les membres de l'assemblée auront consenti à donner ce mandat ; en ce qui le concerne, il ne peut s'y associer, puisqu'il n'est pas autorisé à collaborer aux travaux d'un Sous-Comité.

M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch ne croit pas que ses instructions aient prévu le cas où un Sous-Comité sans mandat de la Commission serait institué.

M. Göhring fait ressortir que la manière de voir de *M. Bourée* mettrait obstacle à ce que le travail fût préparé pour la Côte Orientale.

M. Bourée répond qu'un mandat officiel n'est pas nécessaire. Si la Commission demande simplement à être éclairée sur certains points, rien n'empêche que les Délégués les plus intéressés se réunissent dans ce but.

M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch dit que cela va de soi, mais que tout autre chose est un Sous-Comité ayant un but et un programme déterminés par la Commission. Les Délégués pourront toujours s'entretenir entre eux de ce qui leur plaira ; toutefois, ces conversations n'auraient rien de commun avec la tâche qui est dévolue à la Commission.

M. le Président pense qu'il ne serait peut être pas impossible de se mettre d'accord. La Commission a décidé qu'elle ne donnerait un caractère définitif à ses travaux qu'après le règlement de certaines questions de principe qui sont réservées. C'est alors qu'elle aurait aussi à caractériser la mission du Sous-Comité, dont la tâche actuelle serait de formuler un travail préparatoire pour la Côte Orientale.

M. Bourée se rallie à l'interprétation de *M. le Président*.

M. le Comte de Macedo l'accepte également.

M. le Président demande si MM. les Délégués Britanniques admettent cette interprétation: le Sous-Comité ferait un travail qui conserverait un caractère préparatoire jusqu'au moment de la rédaction du Rapport; les conditions dans lesquelles se ferait ce Rapport resteraient ainsi à déterminer.

Lord Vivian est d'avis qu'ainsi entendue, une réunion officielle des Délégués dans le local de la Commission ne se comprend pas, il suffit qu'ils s'assemblent en réunion privée.

M. le Président croit que le Sous-Comité aurait en tout état de cause un certain mandat, dont la portée resterait seulement à préciser. Il se demande toutefois si, même en considérant ce mandat comme émanant de la Commission, *M. Bourée* ne pourrait pas se borner à émettre certaines réserves, ce qui permettrait au Sous-Comité de se constituer.

M. Bourée regrette de ne pouvoir s'associer à un tel mandat, même sous les réserves qui lui sont suggérées.

M. Göhring rappelle que le Gouvernement Français a admis le principe du déboulement des Tarifs. Or, c'est ce principe qu'il s'agit d'appliquer; la mission qu'on veut confier au Sous-Comité ne peut donc être en opposition avec la manière de voir du Gouvernement Français. Les Délégués des Puissances de la Côte Orientale se sont déclarés prêts à entreprendre cette tâche, mais ils ne peuvent agir qu'en exécution d'un principe sur lequel on s'est mis d'accord dans la Commission.

M. Bourée ne peut modifier ses précédentes déclarations. Le Gouvernement Français n'admet, en ce qui le concerne, qu'une négociation de Cabinet à Cabinet. Il maintient que chaque État doit conserver la liberté absolue de tarifier à son gré, dans la limite de 10 pour cent, sauf entente avec les pays voisins, et il ne peut, dès lors, donner son assentiment à une manière de procéder qui ne s'accorde pas avec ce principe. Les autres États restent libres, comme la France, de s'associer pour atteindre un but déterminé en matière de Tarifs. Mais un mandat collectif ne cadrerait pas avec l'idée qui est celle du Gouvernement Français.

M. le Président avait cru comprendre qu'en parlant d'une négociation de Cabinet à Cabinet on n'avait en vue que la Côte Occidentale.

M. Bourée n'élève aucune objection à ce que les Puissances recherchent en commun le Tarif applicable à la Côte Orientale, dans lequel il n'a pas à intervenir. Mais il ne peut donner son assentiment à une décision de la Commission qui adopterait, même pour cette côte, un mode de procéder en désaccord avec les vues de son Gouvernement. *M. Bourée* est d'avis que la question du mandat qui serait donné au Sous-Comité peut être laissée en suspens. Si ce mandat est considéré comme une condition indispensable, il demandera les instructions de son Gouvernement.

Lord Vivian rappelle à *M. le Ministre de France* l'esprit de conciliation dont toutes les Puissances, et particulièrement la France, n'ont cessé de donner des preuves pendant toute la durée des travaux de la Conférence. C'est cet esprit de conciliation qui a permis à celle-ci, grâce à des concessions réciproques, de surmonter heureusement des difficultés plus sérieuses, et de réaliser le but qu'elle s'était proposé. Aujourd'hui, on a entendu le Représentant d'une Puissance qui a déjà fait de grands sacrifices à l'œuvre commune, déclarer que son Gouvernement ne pourra consentir à l'établissement d'un droit d'entrée au Congo qu'à la double condition qu'il y ait une parfaite égalité de traitement pour le commerce des différentes Puissances intéressées et que cette égalité de traitement trouve sa garantie dans l'approbation de la Commission tout entière aux projets de Tarifs que les Sous-Comités auront élaborés.

Lord Vivian s'adresse à son collègue de France et le prie de faire encore un pas dans la voie de la conciliation en cherchant le moyen de réaliser une entente complète, de nature à satisfaire au désir si légitime que la Commission a presque unanimement exprimé.

M. Bourée serait tout disposé à donner satisfaction au désir exprimé par *M. le Ministre d'Angleterre* s'il n'était lié par des instructions formelles. Il ne croit pas cependant que la difficulté actuellement pendante implique de la part du Gouvernement Français une résistance à un arrangement transactionnel, de nature à donner satisfaction aux vœux dont *M. le Ministre des États-Unis* s'est fait l'interprète. Cette difficulté porte

plutôt sur la procédure que sur le fond de la question. Personne, parmi les Délégués, n'a pu attribuer au Gouvernement de la République l'intention de créer à son profit, à la Côte Occidentale, une situation privilégiée, au détriment des intérêts d'autrui. Quant à lui, il n'épargnera aucun effort pour mettre les vues du Cabinet de Paris en harmonie avec les convenances de chacun, mais il tient à bien faire comprendre que la conduite de son Gouvernement n'est pas dictée par des calculs égoïstes qui pourraient faire croire à un parti pris de sa part.

Il y a certaines questions auxquelles M. Bourée voudrait éviter de toucher en ce moment, mais qui expliquent les préoccupations de son Gouvernement. La situation actuelle n'est plus la même que celle qui existait à l'époque où la Conférence a clôturé ses travaux. A ce moment, en dehors des objections que soulevait le Cabinet de La Haye, il semblait que la position des autres Gouvernements vis-à-vis de leurs Parlements ne donnerait lieu à aucune difficulté. Depuis lors, il s'est produit des incidents qu'on n'avait pas prévus, et qui ont affecté le commerce établi dans le bassin du Congo. Il en est résulté des réclamations très vives et le Parlement Français a été saisi de la question. De là sont nées des interventions avec lesquels on n'avait pas eu à compter à l'origine.

Si sincèrement conciliantes que soient les intentions du Gouvernement Français, il doit tenir compte de ces difficultés et de ces attaques qui n'ont pas épargné la Délégation Française à la Conférence, et visé particulièrement son chef.

Dans ses conditions, il est naturel qu'on cherche à arriver à une entente par des voies autres que celles que l'on avait eu d'abord en vue. C'est là ce qui explique la différence existant en ce moment dans la manière d'envisager non le but à atteindre, mais la marche à suivre pour y arriver. Il n'y a là rien de contraire à l'esprit de conciliation dont est animé le Gouvernement de la République et à la pensée qui l'a porté à s'associer aux travaux de la Commission. Il est resté fidèle à ses convictions, à ses désirs, à ses espérances, mais il demande qu'on fasse la part des embarras et des difficultés qui lui sont actuellement suscitées.

M. Bourée donne l'assurance que rien dans les projets ou les vues de son Gouvernement n'est de nature à justifier des inquiétudes. En ce qui concerne les droits d'entrée, le Gouvernement Français ne les demande pas, il en ferait même bon marché; s'il s'est montré favorable à leur établissement, c'est qu'il a voulu assurer à l'État du Congo les ressources qui lui étaient nécessaires pour accomplir les obligations que l'Acte Général lui impose. C'est dans ces limites seulement qu'il convient, suivant lui, d'arrêter les Tarifs.

Mais la situation géographique des possessions Françaises à la Côte Occidentale, surtout la ligne de partage qui sépare le Congo Français du Gabon, imposent des considérations particulières et ne permettent pas au Gouvernement Français de laisser faire à d'autres un travail qu'exigent sa prévoyance et le soin de sa sécurité.

Les Délégués Français ont expliqué longuement à la Commission les motifs qui justifient leur opinion. On ne leur a répondu que par des considérations générales, tirées de la nécessité de ne pas retarder la marche des travaux de l'assemblée. Ces considérations ont assurément leur valeur, mais les Délégués Français désireraient savoir cependant si les vues qu'ils ont exposées rencontrent des objections sérieuses. Jusqu'ici, en effet, la discussion s'est réduite à un monologue dont ils ont fait tous les frais.

M. le Ministre de Portugal a parfaitement expliqué, dès le début des travaux de la Commission, les difficultés qui s'opposent à l'adoption d'un Tarif commun à tous les États; il s'est exprimé lui-même dans un sens identique.

M. Bourée saurait gré à ses collègues de lui faire connaître les arguments qu'ils opposent à sa manière de voir; il s'empresserait de les communiquer à son Gouvernement, qui ne manquera pas d'y avoir égard.

Lord Vivian fait remarquer que la question du Tarif commun a été longuement discutée en Conférence. Les Plénipotentiaires Britanniques ont vivement insisté pour qu'on adoptât un Tarif Général pour tous les États; ils ont exposé les motifs de leur insistance.

M. le Ministre de Portugal a fait valoir certaines objections résultant de la diversité des conditions économiques des deux côtes du Continent Africain. Mais il avait toujours été clairement entendu que tous les Tarifs, communs ou non, devraient être élaborés par la Commission.

Lord Vivian confirme cette interprétation en citant le passage suivant des déclarations faites par M. le Ministre de France à la Conférence :—

“M. Bourée dit qu'on est d'accord sur le maximum du droit, qui est et reste acquis. Quant à la Commission, elle ne sera autre chose qu'une Commission de dégrèvement.

"Dès le jour de l'achèvement de ses travaux, on pourrait tenir pour définitivement réglée la tarification de tous les articles sur lesquels on se serait mis d'accord, et rendre le Tarif de 10 pour cent provisoirement applicable aux autres jusqu'à ce que l'entente complète se fût établie.

"M. le Ministre de France ajoute qu'il lui paraît impossible que la Commission ne se mette pas d'accord. Des concessions mutuelles s'imposeront, et elles auront pour conséquence l'adoption d'un régime transactionnel."

Il résulte, de la manière la plus explicite, de cette citation que la Commission devait examiner tous les articles du Tarif.

M. Bourée répond que la discussion à laquelle vient de faire allusion Lord Vivian avait pour objet de décider le traitement applicable aux articles du Tarif sur lesquels la Commission ne se serait pas mise d'accord. Quant à la forme dans laquelle cette entente devait être établie, rien n'avait été décidé, et c'est sur ce point que le Gouvernement Français avait fait ses réserves.

Lord Vivian dit que toute la Conférence était d'avis que le ou les Tarifs à établir devaient être soumis à une Commission Technique. S'il en était autrement, celle-ci n'aurait aucune raison d'être.

M. Bourée répète qu'on avait réservé à la Commission l'examen de la question de savoir précisément s'il y aurait ou non un Tarif commun. Le fait de discuter ce point, que la Conférence avait consenti à ne pas examiner, constituerait une attribution suffisamment importante pour justifier à lui seul la réunion de la Commission.

Lord Vivian estime que sur ce point il y a évidemment un malentendu entre son collègue de France et les autres membres de la Conférence; ceux-ci n'interprètent pas comme M. Bourée la portée des attributions assignées à la Commission.

Mr. Terrell dit que lorsqu'il a donné son adhésion à l'établissement du droit d'entrée, c'était sous la condition expresse que les intérêts commerciaux des États-Unis ne fussent pas méconnus dans les pays avec lesquels ils n'avaient pas de Traités spéciaux. C'est pour atteindre ce but que le Gouvernement Américain désirait que le Tarif à instituer dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo fût soumis à l'assentiment de la Commission où se trouvaient les Représentants de tous les pays commerçants ayant ou non des possessions dans ces régions. Mr. Terrell demande, en conséquence, que le principe de l'approbation du Tarif par la Commission soit sauvegardé comme le meilleur moyen de préserver les intérêts du commerce.

M. Bourée reconnaît que les intérêts dont vient de parler M. le Ministre des États-Unis méritent d'être pris en considération. Mais il fait observer qu'il est un autre intérêt qu'il a déjà eu l'occasion d'indiquer, et qui ne doit pas être perdu de vue non plus. En faisant ratifier *ne varietur* par la Commission les Tarifs élaborés, on créerait une situation qui présenterait de grands inconvénients à raison de l'instabilité des conditions économiques des contrées dont il s'agit.

Si l'on veut soumettre à la Commission le régime douanier à établir, il faut que ce dernier comporte sa loi de révision. Mais comment serait-il possible de confier cette révision à une Commission Internationale, quand les causes de révision dont il faut tenir compte sont éminemment locales? On ne trouverait pas ici les conditions de compétence voulues pour procéder à un pareil travail; c'est pour ce motif que le système indiqué par les Délégués Français, et qui consiste à traiter la question de Cabinet à Cabinet, est préférable. Il permet, en effet, aux Gouvernements intéressés de procéder immédiatement aux modifications jugées nécessaires. Soumettre ces modifications à une assemblée internationale, c'est les livrer à tous les hasards d'une incompétence évidente ou à des retards qui rendraient peut-être inutiles des modifications indispensables.

Sir John Kirk fait observer qu'à la Côte Orientale le Tarif modéré qui a existé pendant plus de trente ans n'a pas subi de modifications pendant cette période, ni donné lieu à des réclamations de la part des négociants; au contraire, il n'a entravé en rien le commerce sur cette côte.

M. Bourée répond que les conditions n'y sont pas les mêmes qu'au Congo. Ici la situation, depuis 1885, s'est transformée à ce point qu'on a reconnu la nécessité de reviser l'Article IV du Traité de Berlin auquel on avait cru pouvoir assigner une durée de vingt ans.

M. Banning fait remarquer que, d'après M. le Ministre de France, il ne s'agirait dans l'espèce que d'une question de procédure. Or, les questions de procédure sont intimement liées aux questions de compétence. Si l'on se trouve actuellement en présence de difficultés, c'est précisément parce qu'on a contesté la compétence de la Commission.

Le système du Gouvernement Français aboutit à proclamer l'incompétence de la

Commission. Dès lors, celle-ci n'aurait plus aucune raison d'être, puisqu'elle ne saurait entamer ses travaux sans se heurter à une fin de non-recevoir.

Le Cabinet de Paris, en signant la Déclaration du 2 Juillet, avait paru accepter la création d'une Commission ayant compétence pour élaborer le Tarif. Aujourd'hui, il propose une négociation de Cabinet à Cabinet, c'est-à-dire une procédure tout opposée.

M. Bourée répond que la Commission est réunie précisément pour discuter la question de compétence.

M. Banning croit devoir remettre sous les yeux de l'assemblée le passage suivant du Protocole de la séance de la Conférence du 28 Juin :—

“ *M. Cogordan* ajoute que l'idée de son collègue se rapproche de celle de *M. le Ministre d'Angleterre* et répond aux préoccupations de son Excellence, puisqu'elle tend à l'établissement d'un Tarif Général identique à tout le bassin et sur tous les articles qui n'auraient pas été dégrevés par la Commission.”

Ces paroles de *M. Cogordan* rendaient clairement la pensée à laquelle les Représentants de toutes les Puissances s'étaient ralliés.

M. Bourée dit que *M. Cogordan*, en s'exprimant ainsi, était allé au delà de ce que lui-même avait dit, mais n'avait sûrement pas entendu donner à ses paroles la portée générale que *M. Banning* voudrait leur attribuer.

M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch déclare que son Gouvernement, en le chargeant de le représenter au sein de la Commission, s'était rendu compte que la Déclaration du 2 Juillet était une œuvre de transaction et que le Gouvernement Français n'avait fait de réserve que sur le principe du Tarif commun. *M. le Ministre de France* soulève la question de savoir si la Commission peut s'occuper de ce qui fait l'objet de la Déclaration elle-même. La situation se trouve dès lors changée, et *M. le Ministre d'Autriche-Hongrie* se demande si sa présence à la Commission est encore justifiée et si même cette dernière est encore de quelque utilité. Son Excellence croit également que la question de compétence doit être résolue avant toute autre. Si l'on devait admettre la manière de voir de *M. Bourée*, la Commission n'aurait plus qu'à se séparer. Quant à lui, il a toujours compris que la Commission aurait pour mandat d'élaborer le ou les Tarifs des droits d'entrée. Mais un grand changement semble s'être opéré dans les opinions émises depuis la clôture des travaux de la Conférence. *M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch* désirerait connaître sur ce point l'avis de ses collègues.

M. le Comte d'Alvensleben dit que l'opinion du Gouvernement Impérial est déjà connue. Il réclame pour la Commission le droit d'élaborer le Tarif.

MM. Gosselin et Bardi se prononcent dans le même sens.

M. le Président dit que personne ne demandant plus la parole, il croit devoir résumer la discussion. Une question l'a dominée, celle de la compétence de la Commission. A la suite des explications échangées aujourd'hui, aucun doute ne subsiste sur le sentiment de la grande majorité des Délégués à cet égard. Tous les Délégués, sauf ceux du Gouvernement Français, se sont trouvés d'accord pour réserver à l'approbation ultérieure de la Commission Plénière les décisions prises, quelle que soit la forme qu'on leur donne. Il en résulte qu'ils ont admis que la Commission avait mandat pour faire les Tarifs ou tout au moins pour approuver ceux que les Sous-Comités seraient appelés à préparer. Une entente presque générale s'étant établie sur ce point, la Commission a adopté ensuite la division du Tarif entre les deux régions du bassin conventionnel. Tout aussitôt, on s'est demandé comment il y avait lieu de procéder à l'élaboration des deux Tarifs. L'accord paraissait s'être fait sur la marche à suivre pour la Côte Orientale, lorsqu'un incident a soulevé la question de savoir si le Sous-Comité institué pour cette côte pourrait agir autrement qu'en vertu d'un mandat de la Commission. *M. le Ministre de France* a éprouvé un scrupule ; il craint que l'approbation donnée par lui ne préjuge une décision semblable en ce qui concerne la Côte Occidentale. On est convenu que les Délégués Français en réfèreraient à leur Gouvernement avant que le Sous-Comité commençât ses travaux.

M. le Ministre de France a touché une autre question d'une nature plus délicate et qui semble attirer particulièrement l'attention du Gouvernement Français. Désirant expliquer l'attitude du Cabinet de Paris, *M. Bourée* a dit que si le Gouvernement de la République donne la préférence à la procédure diplomatique qu'il a suggérée, c'est en raison de certains faits, portés à sa connaissance par le commerce et qu'il a l'intention de rattacher à une négociation poursuivie dans cette forme.

M. le Président n'a pas qualité pour se livrer à une appréciation des faits eux-mêmes. Mais il ne croit pas sortir de son rôle en veillant à ce que la Commission reste dans les limites du mandat qui lui est attribué, c'est-à-dire ne dépasse point l'étude des Tarifs des droits d'entrée. Il n'y a donc pas lieu de comprendre dans les débats de la

Commission des actes rentrant dans l'exercice des attributions qu'un Gouvernement possède comme État Souverain.

M. le Président croit qu'il suffit d'indiquer cette réserve pour éviter toute incursion dans un domaine qui doit rester en dehors des délibérations de la Commission. Des faits étrangers à sa compétence ne peuvent, en effet, servir de base à aucune de ses résolutions.

Il reste une dernière question à laquelle l'assemblée s'est également arrêtée. M. le Président veut parler de la variabilité des Tarifs. La Commission elle-même l'a admise à certain point de vue, en adoptant le principe qu'ils seraient différents pour les deux zones du bassin conventionnel. Quant à leur durée, des circonstances locales seront invoquées peut-être pour réclamer une révision. En Europe même, il n'est plus guère d'usage d'adopter, en matière de Tarifs, des engagements à long terme. Si le principe de cette révision est accepté, il y aura des précautions à prendre, des garanties à rechercher. En ce moment, M. le Président ne veut pas insister davantage sur ce point, qui trouvera sa place dans les travaux des Sous-Comités.

M. le Ministre de France a suggéré l'adoption, pour la Côte Occidentale, de négociations de Cabinet à Cabinet. Cette procédure n'ayant pas été prévue, des explications seraient nécessaires sur la nature et la portée que le Gouvernement Français entend donner à sa proposition. M. Bourée a bien voulu promettre d'en référer à Paris. Parmi les Délégués, ceux qui seraient dépourvus des instructions nécessaires pour se prononcer ne tarderont pas sans doute à les réclamer. La Commission sera réunie aussitôt que ses membres se trouveront en mesure de reprendre la discussion.

M. le Président croit devoir rappeler que si l'on ne parvenait pas à concilier les vues divergentes, les travaux de la Conférence auraient été faits en vain. Il y a aujourd'hui précisément un an, dit-il, que la Conférence a commencé son œuvre, et il exprime le ferme espoir que celle-ci ne sera pas compromise par la recherche de la voie qui reste à parcourir pour arriver au but si longtemps et si laborieusement poursuivi.

M. Bourée dit que M. le Président, en se référant à des faits qui ont ému le commerce en France, a cru devoir faire observer que leur examen sortait du mandat, si nettement circonscrit, de la Commission.

M. le Ministre de France partage absolument cette opinion. Mais c'est précisément parce qu'il ne veut et ne peut pas soulever au sein de cette assemblée des questions qui lui sont étrangères, que le Gouvernement Français se préoccupe de régler celles dont il s'agit par des arrangements pris de Cabinet à Cabinet.

Si M. Bourée a cru, de son côté, devoir faire, en passant, une courte digression en dehors du cadre des travaux assignés à la Commission, c'est dans la pensée de mieux expliquer l'attitude de son Gouvernement, auquel on serait peut-être tenté de reprocher une ténacité excessive. A cet égard, les éclaircissements qu'il vient de donner ne paraîtront certainement pas inutiles.

M. le Président répond qu'il ne peut y avoir divergence d'opinion sur l'incompétence de la Commission dans le cas dont il vient de s'agir. Il est nécessaire cependant de remarquer que la Commission étant incontestablement compétente en ce qui concerne les tarifications à l'entrée du Congo, elle doit les régler en dehors et indépendamment des faits que M. le Ministre de France a mentionnés.

M. le Président dit qu'il reste entendu que le Sous-Comité pour le Tarif de la Côte Orientale se réunira, si cela est possible, dès le lendemain.

M. Göhring fait remarquer que le Sous-Comité étant une dépendance de la Commission, il faut que tous les Délégués, sans exception, soient d'accord pour l'ériger et lui permettre de fonctionner. A la suite des déclarations de M. le Ministre de France, l'unanimité requise ne se rencontre pas.

M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch exprime le même avis.

M. le Président répond que l'on n'a pas contesté que l'unanimité fût nécessaire. Mais il a été admis que M. le Ministre de France en référerait immédiatement à Paris.

M. Bourée regrette que les termes formels de ses instructions ne lui permettent pas de rien préjuger. Il s'empressera de réclamer à Paris les directions qui lui font encore défaut.

La séance est levée.

Le Président,
(Signé) Baron LAMBERMONT.

Les Secrétaires,
(Signé) L. ABENDT.
A. DE CUVELIER.
CH. SEEGER.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received November 26.)

(No. 13.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 25, 1890.

WE have ascertained from Count Alvensleben, to whom Sir John Kirk communicated the substance of the remarks contained in your Lordship's despatch to Lord Vivian, No. 286, Africa, of yesterday, on the Memorandum that accompanied our despatch No. 9 of the 19th instant, that no instructions on that subject have been received from Berlin.

The Italian Government have, we are told, accepted without reserve the proposals as contained in this Memorandum.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 26.)

(No. 12. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, November 26, 1890.

WESTERN Congo Basin: My telegram No. 11, Africa.

Count Münster and myself have been told by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that, in view of their engagements to the Chamber of Deputies, the French Government cannot submit any Tariff of their own making for the approval of the Plenary Conference at Brussels.

But, after conversation with the Belgian Minister at Paris, M. Ribot anticipates no difficulty or delay in negotiating separately with the States concerned a Tariff for the western basin, which will satisfy the Congo State in return for the promised concession with regard to obnoxious export duties. His Excellency emphatically repudiates all intention of taking unfair advantage of the geographical position occupied by France in those regions by levying differential duties in her favour, and he is disposed to concur in the proposal about to be recommended to your Lordship's adoption, as he understands, by Lord Vivian.

M. Ribot declares further, that he has done nothing to approve or encourage the opposition of the Dutch, and that he will not answer their proposal for a separate Conference till he has come to an agreement with Portugal and the Congo State on the Tariff question for the western basin of the Congo.

The Belgian Legation at Paris seems satisfied with these assurances, and M. Ribot considers that the course he proposes is best calculated to overcome Dutch opposition.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 290. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 26, 1890.

I HAVE agreed with Count Hatzfeldt that Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris should endeavour, in concert with the German Ambassador, to induce the French Government to consent to the fixation by the Commission of a minimum Tariff for the Western States of the conventional basin of the Congo. I have sent instructions to Lord Lytton in accordance with the Agreement, and have explained to his Excellency that, as the maximum has been fixed by the Conference, if the minimum is fixed by the Commission, the States concerned would be free to settle Tariff details within the two limits.

I stated in my despatch No. 286 of the 24th instant, the reasons why Her Majesty's Government cannot accept the fixation of a minimum Tariff for the Eastern Congo States, which may be summed up in this maxim that a free-trade Power cannot, on general principles, agree to a fixed minimum. But your Lordship will understand that these objections do not apply as regards the Western States, there being no reason in principle why such an arrangement should not prevail where all the Powers are Protectionists.

The position of Her Majesty's Government is therefore quite consistent. As regards

the arrangement with which they are connected, they refuse their assent to a system which would be incompatible with the ordinary practice of this country, but they urge the French Government to agree as regards the separate arrangement with which they are connected, in order to facilitate the general agreement, with the knowledge that in so doing that Government would in no way deviate from the ordinary practice of France.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 253.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir J. Kirk.

(No. 3.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 26, 1890.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 6 of the 14th instant, reporting the proceedings of the Tariff Commission at the sitting of the 13th instant, I have to state that I approve the action taken by you and Mr. Gosselin on that occasion. Her Majesty's Government cannot accept any proposal which would, directly or indirectly, admit of differential treatment, and would thus defeat the objects of the Berlin Act, which secured to all the Powers equality of commercial rights.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 254.

The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.

(No. 12. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 27, 1890, 5.45 P.M.

I HAVE to state, with reference to your Excellency's telegram of to-day, that you may consider as addressed to yourself, the instructions contained in my despatch No. 290, Africa, of yesterday. Our views will be thus explained by the first paragraph. But I am sending you an instruction to night in fuller detail.

No. 255.

The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.

(No. 223.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 27, 1890.

I HAVE agreed with the German Ambassador that your Excellency should endeavour, in concert with your German colleague, to induce the French Government to consent to the fixation by the Congo Technical Commission of a minimum Tariff for the Western States of the conventional basin of the Congo.

I should explain to your Excellency that the basis upon which we propose that the French assent should be given is, that as the maximum of 10 per cent. has been fixed in the Declaration annexed to the Act of the Brussels Conference, the minimum should be fixed with the approval of the Commission, while the States concerned in the western portion of the conventional basin of the Congo would be free to settle Tariff details within the two limits.

In my despatch to Lord Vivian No. 286 of the 24th instant, of which a copy was communicated to your Excellency in my No. 219 of the following day, I stated the reasons why Her Majesty's Government cannot accept the fixation of a minimum Tariff for the Eastern Congo States. These may be summed up, in the maximum, that Great Britain, as a free-trade Power, cannot, on general principles, agree to a fixed minimum; but your Excellency will understand that these objections do not apply as regards the Western States, there being no reason, in principle, why such an arrangement should not prevail where all the Powers are Protectionists.

I explained to Lord Vivian that the position of Her Majesty's Government is therefore quite consistent. As regards the portion of the general arrangement with which they are connected, they refuse their assent to a system which would be incompatible with the ordinary practice of this country, but they urge the French Government to agree as regards the separate arrangement with which they are connected in order to facilitate the general

agreement, with the knowledge that, in so doing, France would in no way deviate from her ordinary practice.

This explanation is given for your own information in case, in the course of the discussions, any question should arise of apparent inconsistency in the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government as regards the negotiations with the French Government. It will be sufficient for your Excellency to endeavour, in concert with Count Münster, to induce M. Ribot to consent to the fixation, with the assent of the Commission, of a minimum Tariff for the Western States of the conventional basin of the Congo.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 256.

Question asked in the House of Commons, November 27, 1890.

Mr. Sydney Buxton,—To ask the Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, whether Her Majesty's Government is able to inform the House as to the present position of affairs relating to the enforcement of the General Act of the Brussels Conference, and whether he will lay the Protocols of the Conference upon the Table of the House:

And, whether it is true that, unless the Government of the Netherlands affixes its signature to the General Act of the Brussels Conference by the 1st January next, the deliberations of the Conference for the Suppression of the Slave Trade, agreed to by the other sixteen Powers represented at the Conference, will be nullified.

Answer.

The Protocols will be laid immediately.

The present position is, that Holland still refuses to sign the Act with the Declaration annexed to it relating to import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo. The period during which her signature can be affixed expires at the end of the year.

No. 257.

Sir E. Malet to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 28, 8.15 P.M.)

(No. 89. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, November 28, 1890, 2.45 P.M.

YOUR Lordship's despatch No. 363 of the 24th instant.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gives his entire acquiescence in the views therein expressed, on the subject of the Congo States' right to levy dues. The German Ambassador at Paris has received instructions to act in concert with Her Majesty's Ambassador in reference to this matter.

No. 258.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.**

(No. 224.)

Foreign Office, November 28, 1890.

[Transmits copy of Sir H. Rumbold's No. 59 of November 22, 1890: *ante*, No. 237.]

No. 259.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 368.)

Foreign Office, November 28, 1890.

[Transmits copy of British Delegates' No. 13 of November 25, 1890: *ante*, No. 250.]

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 29.)

(No. 164. Africa.)

My Lord,

Paris, November 26, 1890.

IN answer to the representation which, after concert with my German colleague, I made to-day to M. Ribot in accordance with your Lordship's telegraphic instruction No. 10 of the 24th instant, his Excellency stated that the French Government is absolutely precluded by its engagements to the Chamber from making its Tariff Regulations for the French possessions on the Congo subject to examination and approval by the Plenary Conference.

Those possessions, said his Excellency, lie partly within the Congo Basin and partly outside of it. It would not be practically possible to have a separate Tariff for each portion of them, and even if he were to assent to the course urged on his adoption, it would be impossible to make the smallest modification in the Tariff of either portion during the next fifteen years, without the permission of foreign Powers.

Without entering into further details, however, on this point, it was sufficient for him to point out that the present state of opinion in France on the subject of her commercial relations placed it entirely out of the power of any French Ministry to cripple her future freedom, of dealing with her Tariff in any part of her dominions after the determination of existing Commercial Treaties.

M. Ribot subsequently repeated the same statement to Count Münster. He had previously spoken in the sense of it to Baron Beyens, and we are all of the same opinion, viz., that on this point no concession is to be expected from the French Government.

His Excellency, however, went on to say that France has no intention of establishing differential duties, or taking or seeking any sort of unfair advantage of her geographical position on the Congo.

He then referred to his conversation on this subject with Baron Beyens, of which your Lordship will find an account in my accompanying despatch No. 166 of this day's date, and he expressed his confidence in being able to settle without difficulty or delay, in concert with the other States of the western basin, and by separate negotiation with those States, a common import Tariff which would be satisfactory to all concerned.

M. Ribot next alluded to a suggestion of which he had been informed by M. Bourée, who had reported to him that Lord Vivian was prepared to submit to your Lordship as an alternative which might be adopted in default of any other solution of the difficulty. This was that the Technical Conference should fix the Tariff for the eastern basin of the Congo, leaving the Tariff of the western basin to be settled by separate negotiations between the Western States, and that the King of the Belgians should communicate to the Conference the Tariff of the Congo State.

By this I understand his Excellency to mean the export Tariff. But your Lordship is no doubt cognizant of the details of the arrangement to which M. Ribot referred, and to which he seemed not indisposed to agree, though he thought the case would be sufficiently met by the course he had discussed with Baron Beyens, who appeared perfectly to be satisfied with it.

Finally, his Excellency asserted emphatically that France had no *arrière-pensée* in this matter. She fully recognized, he said, the financial necessities of the Congo State; and, short of parting with her fiscal freedom, she was ready to do everything required of her by the strictest interpretation of neighbourly duty and good-will. The only remaining obstacle, he said, to the attainment of the objects of the Conference comes from Holland, and there is absolutely no foundation for the idea, if such an idea exists, that the opposition of Holland is secretly approved or abetted by France. To the Dutch proposal for the convocation of a separate Conference he should make no reply until an agreement had been arrived at by the Western Congo States on the subject of their Tariff; after which it would, he anticipated, be much more difficult for the Dutch Government to maintain its present obstructive attitude.

I learn from my German colleague, who called on me this afternoon, after seeing M. Ribot, that his Excellency's language to him was identical with his language to myself, in reply to our joint representation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) LYTTON.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 29.)

(No. 165. Africa.)

My Lord,

Paris, November 26, 1890.

WHEN I saw M. Ribot to-day on the subject of your Lordship's telegram No. 10 of the 24th instant, and of my despatch No. 164 of this day's date, I quoted to him the language both of M. Bourée and of M. Cogordan (reported by Lord Vivian in his despatch No. 275 of the 19th, and in the British Commissioners' Memorandum of the same date), as showing that the French Plenipotentiaries had accepted in principle the fixation by the Technical Conference of a common Tariff for the conventional basin of the Congo, and that the present attitude of the French Government on this point was apparently in complete disaccordance with that of its own Plenipotentiaries when the point was under discussion in the Brussels Conference.

I also repeated the argument addressed by Lord Vivian to M. Bourée—that, if it has no authority to do this, it is difficult to understand for what purpose the Technical Conference has been convoked and why the non-territorial States have been put to the trouble of sending their Plenipotentiaries to it.

To this M. Ribot replied that the above-mentioned language of the two Plenipotentiaries was undoubtedly not in accordance with the attitude of their Government, which, however, had never varied on this point, and was the same from the first as it is now. When, therefore, they held the language I quoted to him, they had in their anxiety to smoothe matters and tide over difficulties, exceeded their instructions which, as he had subsequently pointed out to them, were explicit and peremptory on the point. To the question why the Conference was convoked if it was not to fix a common Tariff for the Congo States, he could see no adequate answer. But the question did not concern France, who had not proposed or desired the Conference, although she had consented to it. He had never recognized its necessity. But to the representations made by M. Bourée in this sense Baron de Lambert had replied that even if France stood out of it, in regard to the Tariff for the western basin, the Conference would still have plenty of other work to do, which, however, Baron Lambert did not specify; and in deference to that opinion he, M. Ribot, had not felt called upon to oppose its appointment.

I have, &c.

(Signed) LYTTON.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 29.)

(No. 166. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Paris, November 26, 1890.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatches, Africa, of this day's date, I have received from the Belgian Legation here the following information, which explains to some extent the change in the attitude of the French Government with regard to the Tariff to be fixed for the Western States of the conventional basin of the Congo.

It appears that when, soon after the signature of the General Act of the Brussels Slave Trade Conference, the King of the Belgians, in the exercise of what he considered his sovereign rights, placed an export duty of about 4 fr. per kilog. on ivory exported from the Congo State, the trade of an important Marseilles house became seriously affected by this duty; and, unknown to the Belgian Legation, during the interval between the signature of the General Act and the recent reassembly of the Brussels Conference, considerable pressure was brought to bear upon the French Government to withhold their assent to any further advance in the negotiations until this obnoxious duty had been removed.

The Belgian Legation regret the hasty action taken by the King, for had His Majesty only waited until the negotiations were further advanced, it is probable that nothing would have been heard of the matter.

As it was, however, in the course of the debate in the Chamber of Deputies on the Foreign Office Estimates, the Report of which I had the honour to transmit to your Lordship in my despatch No. 374 of the 7th instant, M. Delafosse called attention to the immediate and absolute ruin inflicted on French trade by the duties of the Congo State; and he asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs for an assurance that any decisions arrived

at by the Brussels Conference should be submitted for the sanction of the French Parliament. M. Ribot, in reply, undertook that this should be done, and it is by this engagement that his hands are now tied; and his Excellency considers that it will be perfectly useless at the present moment to ask the sanction of the French Chamber of Deputies to a commercial engagement binding the French Government for several years when they have repeatedly declined to enter into any extending beyond the date of the expiration of the Commercial Treaties in 1892.

The Belgian Legation are of opinion that M. Ribot's fear of the action of the French Chamber is well founded, and that it would never consent to be bound by any Tariff approved by the Plenary Conference. They consider that, on this point, M. Ribot is "inébranlable," but they hope that an arrangement of another kind may be come to with him.

On Saturday last the Belgian Minister asked his Excellency to specify the French grounds of complaint against the duties in the Congo State, and said that they would, on their side, make proposals with regard to the duties within French territory with a view to a compromise being effected. M. Ribot said that he would at once submit this suggestion for the consideration of the Ministry of the Colonies, but up till yesterday the Belgian Legation had received no reply, although I gather from their tone that they have little doubt that an agreement between France, the Congo State, and Portugal as to the Tariff arrangements for the Western States would be arrived at without much difficulty.

I have, &c.

(Signed) LYTTON.

No. 263.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received November 29.)

(No. 285, Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 28, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a Memorandum by Sir John Kirk, suggesting a way of meeting the objections of Germany to the adoption of a Customs Tariff for the East Coast which would not fix a minimum as well as a maximum limit, and to the free entry of goods into the interior of Africa through Nyassaland by the Zambesi.

Sir John Kirk also suggests that a certain latitude might be allowed to the group of Powers on the West Coast, for the revision and modification of their Tariffs within fixed limits, and subject to the sanction of the Plenary Commission, but this is just the point on which the French Government persistently refuse to give way.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 263.

Memorandum.

SINCE last meeting in Commission various plans have been discussed between individual members with a view to find a compromise that would allow the work of the Commission to proceed.

The position assumed by France, which is generally admitted to be untenable, however, renders such an agreement very difficult.

The scheme we have accepted, and which meets with the support of most of the Powers, is that the eastern and western groups of States territorially affected should each frame a Tariff and submit it for discussion in full Commission, thus giving a guarantee that the Tariff to be applied will secure the conditions which the Conference had in view, namely, moderate import duties equitably adjusted which will yield the resources required by the Congo State, as well as perfect equality of treatment of all merchandize without distinction of origin and freedom of transit.

Such a scheme has been introduced before a Sub-Commission composed of the Delegates of the group of Powers on the East Coast, based upon the Customs Tariff now in force on the greater part of that coast under existing Commercial Treaties.

To this the British Government has given its assent, subject to the condition that the duty of 5 per cent. on imports is to be a maximum rate that may be reduced by any one Power.

The German Delegates are opposed to such a possible reduction, and think the rate should be fixed and obligatory. There appears no ground for serious difference on this point, which is, under the circumstances, not one of practical importance. The object of the arrangement is to assimilate the régime now in force under Treaty, which cannot be altered by the Commission, with that to be applied to the few points on the East Coast to which the rules of the Berlin Act alone refer.

The rate fixed by the Zanzibar Treaties is, as will be seen by the references marginally given,* only a maximum rate of 5 per cent., which cannot be exceeded.

Although the Sultanate of Zanzibar has thus been free to reduce the duty on any class of goods, the full rate has ever since 1833 been invariably levied, and it is on the duties collected at this rate that the composition made to the Sultan by the British, German, and Italian Companies has been calculated.

The German Government have, therefore, a perfect guarantee, in view of these pecuniary arrangements, that the full 5 per cent. duty will be maintained.

The question of import duties on the Zambesi and Shiré waterway into the free zone, to which Germany attaches great importance, seeing that this route in British hands is likely to compete seriously with German trade from the East Coast is one that might be adjusted on the lines of the principle admitted by us in our recent Treaty with Portugal and in previous negotiations, that Portugal is entitled to levy a moderate transit due on goods passing up the Zambesi. For some time such a duty was fixed by mutual agreement at 3 per cent., and duties of this amount were admitted in the inchoate Anglo-Portuguese Treaty which preceded the Berlin Conference.

Why, therefore, should not this matter be settled during the negotiation that must take place before the expiry of the Anglo-Portuguese *modus vivendi*, we, on our part, allowing Portugal to levy a moderate transit duty on goods so as to meet the German objection to a free entry of goods into the country behind Zanzibar. While Portugal, on her side, in consideration of so valuable a source of income, might be asked to adjust the territorial question of boundaries in a way agreeable to us.

As regards the three Congo States on the West Coast, it appears to me that a certain amount of Tariff autonomy within fixed limits, allowing a sufficient scope for revision and modification, might be permitted without danger, provided that these limits were sanctioned by the Commission.

This, however, is the very point which France persistently refuses to concede.

(Signed) JOHN KIRK.

Brussels, November 27, 1890.

No. 264.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 363.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 29, 1890.

THE difficulties which have been created at Brussels by the refusal of the Netherlands Government to sign the two Acts to which the Slave Trade Conference had agreed do not appear to be nearer their solution than they were before the meeting of the Technical Commission. It seems possible that all the efforts to find a compromise, in which both that Government and the other Powers can agree, will ultimately break down, and in that case there is imminent danger that the beneficent labours of the Conference will be entirely nugatory.

Under these circumstances, I think it may be worth while to consider more carefully than has hitherto been done the precise nature of the obstacle that prevents the Congo Government from levying the duties which have been declared by the Slave Trade Conference to be necessary to the execution of the provisions on which it has agreed.

The first circumstance to which it is desirable that attention should be drawn is the position which the Netherlands Government occupied at the West African Conference in 1884. It is, I think, the usual practice that those Powers should meet in Conference whose assent is necessary to any decision on the subject upon which the Conference is invited to deliberate. This rule, however, was not observed in the convocation of the West African Conference; and the title of the various Powers to be present was by no means the same. While the assent of Great Britain, and France, and Germany, and Portugal, and Belgium, and perhaps some others was necessary (inasmuch as they possessed territories upon the African Continent which

* Treaty with United States, Article III, 1893; France, Article X, 1844; Portugal, Article III, 1879; Germany, Article VII, 1885; Great Britain, Article VII, 1886.

were affected by the proceedings of the Conference), the Netherlands Government was not in that position. It had no possessions on the African Continent. Every decision taken by the Conference would have been equally valid if the Representatives of the Netherlands Government had not been present. It consented, and could consent, to nothing in return for the rights which, by its presence at that Conference and its signature of the Final Act, were conferred on it for the first time. The Powers bound themselves to Holland in certain respects, but Holland bound herself to nothing in return. There was no consideration given for that right to fetter the action of the territorial Powers of Africa which Holland then received, and which she is now unhappily exercising.

This circumstance does not of course diminish the validity of the obligations into which the Powers entered towards her, and to which she has a full legal right to appeal. But it is a consideration of which we cannot ignore the force when we come to the interpretation of these obligations. If the Netherlands Government had contributed to the common agreement by giving some consent which could not have been dispensed with, or by accepting obligations in common with others, it would have been necessary, before affixing a meaning to those obligations, to inquire, not only what signification the words would support, but what was the intention of Holland in accepting them. But her position as a non-territorial Power precludes the belief that her signature was dependent on the adoption of any particular interpretation of the signatures of the other Powers; and as she was simply receiving an advantage and not conferring any, no wrong can be done to her by a literal construction of the words in which she concurred. We are not bound to look behind them in order to ascertain her intentions. It is to the words, and to the words alone, that we must look for the scope and limit of the operation of the provisions in the Final Act which are relied upon in the present controversy.

This provision is contained in Article IV of the Congo Act, signed the 26th February, 1885: "Les marchandises importées dans ces territoires resteront affranchies de droits d'entrée et de transit." This sentence is usually quoted as if it stood alone, and as though it implied that no tax could be levied on goods at the time of their importation. This view, however, is not consistent with the preceding Article, which distinctly states that merchandise imported into these territories by sea or land may be required to pay certain taxes, under circumstances which are defined. The following is its language: "Les marchandises de toute provenance importées dans ces territoires, sous quelque pavillon que ce soit, par la voie maritime ou fluviale ou par celle de terre, n'auront à acquitter d'autres taxes que celles qui pourront être perçues comme une équitable compensation de dépenses utiles pour le commerce et qui, à ce titre, devront être également supportées par les nationaux et par les étrangers de toute nationalité." In inquiring, therefore, if a tax on imported merchandise, whether imported by the coast or through the river, is justifiable, the point to be ascertained is simply whether it answers to the definition contained in this Article III. The two Articles III and IV must be read together. Import duties outside the scope of Article III are clearly forbidden, but import duties which fall within its scope are as clearly legitimate. The definition by which the import duties which are allowed are separated from those which are forbidden is contained in the words that they must "être perçues comme une équitable compensation de dépenses utiles pour le commerce." The whole controversy, therefore, resolves itself into this question, whether the expenses which are to be defrayed by the duties which it is desired now to levy are expenses "utiles pour le commerce."

There can be no doubt that, in the use of this phrase, the Representatives who signed the Act of 1885 were not thinking of the Slave Trade. They were thinking of expenditure of a more material kind, such as harbours, wharfs, pilotage, and such like. But for the reasons which I have indicated above, it does not appear to me that in this case we are bound by the circumstance that a particular class of expenses escaped the notice or regulation of the Representatives altogether. They do not mention expenses for the suppression of the land Slave Trade as a ground for import duty, either for the purpose of admitting them, or for the purpose of excluding them. They omit to mention them altogether. But, under present circumstances, what we have to look to is simply the meaning of the words; what we have to ask is, whether the interpretation we adopt is one which the words will support. From this point of view I can hardly conceive that it will be doubtful that expenses incurred for the purpose of preventing Slave Trade, and the slave raids which support it, are expenses useful to commerce. By the light of the information which we now possess, and which has been set forth by Lavigerie, by Cameron and by

Stanley and others, we can entertain no doubt, not only that the suppression of slave raids is useful for commerce, but that it is a condition of commercial progress so indispensable that without it all other expenditure will be in vain. We know that devastation, depopulation, the destruction of villages and of cultivations, the scattering and extermination of the inhabitants, mark the course of an Arab slave-raiding expedition; and that there are large districts in Africa, measured by hundreds of square miles, which formerly bore a teeming population, and which, under the hands of the slave-raider, have relapsed into the condition of a desert. It is evident that, while this scourge exists, any progress in cultivation or in the development of resources is impossible; and these are the foundations on which a more extended commerce must of necessity be built.

A curious evidence of the marvellous effect which the abolition of this Traffic has upon production and commerce is mentioned in the Protocols of one of the earlier Conferences held for the purpose of abolishing it. It so happened that, during the great war, England was put in a position to give a practical proof that the Slave Trade and the destruction of commerce were closely bound together, and that the abolition of the Traffic, wherever it could be effected, was unquestionably a "dépense utile pour le commerce." The whole of the West Coast north of the Equator, with slight exceptions, fell into our hands during that war, and of course, wherever the English rule prevailed, the Slave Trade became impossible. Lord Castlereagh, at the second Conference of the eight Powers at Vienna on the 28th January, 1815, as reported in the Protocol, gives a striking illustration of the economical and commercial results of this temporary abolition: "Il a dit que l'Angleterre, s'étant trouvée en possession pendant la dernière guerre de tous les Établissements Européens sur les côtes de l'Afrique au nord de la ligne, à l'exception de ceux de Portugal, avoit eu le tems de mettre à profit le bien que la cessation seule de la Traite a fait à ce pays, pour leur préparer une existence plus heureuse; que les mesures adoptées à cet effet n'avoient pas été infructueuses, que sur plusieurs points de ces côtes l'économie intérieure, la culture et l'industrie, à en juger d'après l'augmentation du commerce en marchandises indigènes, paroissoient avoir fait des progrès sensibles, et que la valeur annuelle de leurs productions exportées, ne montant avant l'époque de l'abolition qu'à environ 80,000*l.*, avoit excédé en dernier lieu la somme de 1,000,000*l.*"

It would not be difficult to multiply illustrations of this kind, but the point will hardly be disputed.

If, therefore, we confine our attention, as under the circumstances we are entitled to do, to the strict meaning of the language employed by the Final Act, it is evident that the expenses imposed by the decisions of the Slave Conference upon the States of the Congo Basin are such as the Act permits to be defrayed by means of import duties.

You are authorized to give a copy of this despatch to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to ask him to consider it. If it shall seem to the Powers who have agreed to the two Acts of last July, or to a considerable number of them, that the interpretation I have explained is one which we can properly recommend to the Congo State, the difficulty in which we are placed by the attitude of the Netherlands Government will be removed. It will then be open for the Congo State to levy what import duties it thinks necessary, subject only to these two conditions: first, that they must have nothing differential in their character; and, secondly, that the net revenue proceeding from them must be entirely expended in carrying out the decisions of the Conference at Brussels.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 265.

Sir E. Malet to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 1.)

(No. 141. Africa.)

My Lord,

Berlin, November 27, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 363, Africa, of the 24th instant, respecting the right of the Congo State to levy import duties under certain conditions, and to transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of my note to Baron von Marschall, in which I inclosed to his Excellency a copy of your Lordship's above-mentioned despatch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWARD B. MALET.

Inclosure in No. 265.

Sir E. Malet to Baron Marschall.

M. le Baron,

Berlin, November 26, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Excellency herewith copy of a despatch which Lord Salisbury has addressed to me on the subject of the difficulties which have been created at Brussels by the attitude assumed by the Netherlands Government with regard to the decisions of the Slave Trade Conference; and I am authorized by the Marquis of Salisbury to give your Excellency a copy of this despatch, and to ask your Excellency to be so good as to consider the views of Her Majesty's Government as laid down by his Lordship.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) EDWARD B. MALET.

No. 266.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 1.)

(No. 61. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, November 27, 1890.

WHEN I last saw M. Hartsen on questions connected with the late King's funeral, I purposely abstained from touching upon the question of the Congo duties. My colleagues have, I believe, of late observed the same reticence.

It so happened, however, that on Friday preceding the King's death the German Minister had an interview with his Excellency, in which he pressed for an early reply to the question whether, in the event of a Conference being agreed to at which the Dutch proposals should be discussed, and those proposals being rejected, he would then engage himself to sign the Act of Brussels together with the Declaration appended to it. My colleague added that a verbal assurance from his Excellency to that effect would be sufficient, provided it were accompanied by a statement that, in giving it, the Minister for Foreign Affairs was acting in complete accord with his colleagues.

M. Hartsen promised to communicate with the other members of the Cabinet, and to let Baron de Saurma have a definite reply.

The German Minister, in imparting this to me, talked at some length of the awkward turn which affairs had taken in the Tariff Commission. He seemed to apprehend that the design which the French Government really had in view was to wreck the whole of the Brussels arrangements, with the object of freeing themselves from the obligations they had contracted in regard to the right of search.

Your Lordship is so fully acquainted with the proceedings of the Tariff Commission that I cannot pretend to offer any information on the subject; but I may mention that the Swedish Minister, who was here for a few days (being also accredited to this Court), told me that he was immensely struck by the complete change in the demeanour of M. Bourée. Instead of being full of fire and talking with great volubility, as during the sittings of the Conference, he now spoke with the utmost deliberation, and as if weighing every word, and was evidently tied down by the most stringent instructions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 267.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 1.)

(No. 286. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 28, 1890.

I SEE from your Lordship's telegram No. 68 of yesterday that M. Ribot stated to Lord Lytton that he was disposed to concur in a suggestion for the arrangement of the difficulty arising from the insistence of France on complete Tariff autonomy in the Congo Basin, which he understood from M. Bourée I was prepared to recommend to your Lordship for adoption.

So many expedients have been broached that I cannot exactly call to mind what

this suggestion may have been, but it probably refers to an idea which occurred to me and which I privately imparted to M. Bourée without any thought of his communicating it to his Government, that while the Independent State and the Portuguese Congo might present their respective Tariffs to the Commission for sanction, the French might simply submit a declaration of their intention not to impose duties beyond a maximum limit and to respect the principles laid down in the Berlin Act of equal treatment of goods without distinction of origin and of freedom of transit.

As, however, this suggestion involved the necessity of submitting the declaration to the Commission for sanction, which the French Government positively refuse to do, I had not thought any more of it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN

No. 268.

Mr. Gosselin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 1.)

(No. 287. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, November 30, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to report that Baron Lambermont, in the course of conversation this morning, stated that the Congo Government expect to learn to-day or to-morrow the extent of the modifications desired by the French Government with regard to the existing export duties and licences; and that it is then proposed to commence direct negotiations with Paris on the subject, which the Baron hopes will be brought to a satisfactory conclusion this week.

He added that he made this communication at the express desire of the King, who wishes that your Lordship should be kept informed of every phase of the negotiations.

A similar communication will be made this afternoon to Baron d'Alvensleben.

I gathered that His Majesty, without pledging himself indefinitely for the future, is willing to undertake to maintain the Decrees, when modified, in force for a certain fixed period, possibly for ten years. The Baron qualified the proposed arrangement as a sort of Commercial Treaty which would in no way impair the sovereign rights of the Independent State.

I have, &c.
(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 269.

Mr. Gosselin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 3.)

(No. 288. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 2, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 287, Slave Trade Conference, of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, contrary to Baron Lambermont's expectation, the Congo Government have not yet learnt the tenour of the French demands with regard to the modification of the export duties and licences, but have been assured that this delay does not arise from any ill-will, but from the fact that the French Colonial authorities have been fully occupied last week in defending their budget in the Chamber, and have therefore been unable to find time to attend to the business of the Congo Commission.

The general meeting of the "Société du Haut Congo," which is the Company the most directly interested in the obnoxious Decrees, is fixed for the 15th instant, and, to avoid serious remonstrances on the part of his own subjects, the King will be obliged to announce to the meeting the proposed modifications, which Baron Lambermont informs me are already decided on except in one or two minor details.

Should this be known at Paris it may possibly explain the delay which has arisen, the French Government desiring to see His Majesty's hand forced here by a Belgian Company rather than by themselves.

Under these circumstances, and should no answer arrive from Paris, it is probable that the Congo Government will communicate to M. Ribot the modifications they intend to make, adding that they are the King's last word, and that he cannot undertake to bind

himself for the future, or in any way compromise the sovereign rights of [the Independent State.

No date is yet fixed for the next meeting of the Commission, which can hardly now be summoned before the beginning of next week.

I have, &c.
(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 270.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 3.)

(No. 13. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, December 3, 1890, 4 P.M.

I SAW the French Minister for Foreign Affairs again to-day, and pressed upon him the proposal that a Minimum Tariff for the Western Congo shall be fixed by the Technical Commission, details being left for settlement by negotiations between the States concerned. He will consult his colleagues upon this proposal, but says there are points in it which he does not understand, for reasons which he explained to me, and which I will report in a despatch. He adds that he was assured last Monday by the Belgian Minister that the opposition to the French view of this question comes from England and not from the Congo State, the Belgian Government being quite willing to settle it in the manner desired by France, by direct negotiation, without reference to the Conference.

No. 271.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 4.)

(No. 14. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, December 4, 1890, 1 P.M.

IN saying to me, as I reported in my preceding telegram of yesterday, that he would submit to his colleagues our proposal for a Minimum Tariff, M. Ribot held out little hope of its acceptance.

To Count Münster, however, he said most positively that France cannot accept a fixed minimum.

Yet the Belgian Minister has just told me that the language held to him by M. Ribot is to the effect that he is by no means indisposed to consider our proposal favourably, but Baron Beyens assures me that he has received neither instructions nor information from Brussels with regard to it, and is in complete ignorance as to its origin.

No. 272.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 113. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 4, 1890.

CONGO duties.

We have every reason to believe that the difficulties said to be likely to arise on this subject in the French Chambers are genuine, and we therefore propose that Count Münster and Lord Lytton should agree to the Tariff being settled immediately by the Western Powers "de Cabinet à Cabinet," the Commission being at once informed, which would then take, or decline to take, such action as they might consider to be proper.

No. 273.

The Earl Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 5.)

(No. 169. Africa.)
My Lord,

Paris, December 3, 1890.

THE explanations referred to in your Lordship's despatch to Lord Vivian No. 290 of the 26th ultimo, and contained in your despatch to myself No. 223, Africa, of the

27th ultimo, respecting the proposed fixation by the Congo Technical Commission of a Minimum Tariff for the Western Congo Basin, did not reach me until after my interview with M. Ribot, of which the result was reported to your Lordship in my despatch No. 164, Africa, of the 26th ultimo.

On receipt of those explanations, I again called on M. Ribot, and pressed for his assent to the fixation of a Minimum Tariff by the Technical Commission, pointing out that as the maximum has already been fixed by the Conference, the adoption of this proposal would leave the States concerned quite free to settle all Tariff details between the two limits by independent negotiation "de Cabinet à Cabinet."

His Excellency asked me whether, in the event of the States concerned being unable to agree upon a common Tariff between the two limits, they were to be subjected to a common Tariff fixed for them by the Conference; and whether, in that case, it was the Minimum or the Maximum Tariff that was to be applied to them.

I said I was unprepared to discuss such a contingency because it was excluded by his Excellency's own previous proposals, which rested on the assumption that the States concerned, if left to themselves, would have no difficulty in agreeing upon a common Tariff. In neither case, therefore, did it seem necessary to contemplate a difficulty which was not more fanciful, or less likely to occur, in the one case than in the other.

His Excellency admitted this, and said he only asked the question in order to get more light upon the practical object of the proposal I had made to him. For if this was not the contingency against which that proposal was meant to provide, what other object was it intended to secure? He also wished for further information as to the scope of the proposal. For instance, was the proposed minimum to be in reference only to certain articles specified by the Commission dutiable, or was it to be applicable without exception to all goods entering French territory in the Congo Basin, whatever the nature or description of them? In short, is it intended by the fixation of a Minimum Tariff that no imports of any sort shall be duty free? And if not, what is the scope of the proposal?

I said I could only interpret the proposal in accordance with the terms of it, which I understood to mean that, within the limits fixed in each direction, the States concerned would be free to put what duties they pleased upon stuffs and tissues of all descriptions—spirits, arms, &c. "Yes," he replied, "all such articles are obviously dutiable. But how about corn? How about many other natural products, some of which may be perhaps exclusively produced by France, and, therefore, not competitive with the produce of any other country? Is the Commission to schedule dutiable and non-dutiable imports? If not, what interest can England possibly have in trying to compel France to levy import duties on goods which we would otherwise be willing to admit duty free?"

I observed to M. Ribot that although, no doubt, the principle of a Minimum Tariff was one which England, as a free-trade Power, could not adopt in her own case, this principle was common to all protectionist States, and it did not therefore lie in the mouth of their Representatives to object to it. "But," said his Excellency, "I am not objecting to it. I raise no question of principle. All I want to know is the nature of the commercial advantage, or other practical object, on behalf of which you make this proposal. Of course, it is only natural and reasonable that you should wish to limit the indulgence of our protectionist proclivities by a Maximum Tariff; but I am at a loss to understand your reason for seeking to fetter our non-protectionist action by a Minimum Tariff."

In reply to these observations I repudiated all exclusively English motives of any kind for our advocacy of an arrangement which, if adopted, would give some sort of general fixity to a common import Tariff for the Western Congo Basin; and I adverted to the recognized necessity of securing to the Congo State a Customs revenue sufficient to enable it to carry out the duties allotted to it by the Brussels Conference.

M. Ribot replied that to this necessity France is quite as alive as any other Power, and that she cannot be expected to appreciate proposals made on the assumption that, if not restrained by a foreign authority, she will act in disregard of it. But he went on to say that, if we were acting only in the interests of the Congo State, our action was not in accordance with the language held to him on behalf of that State by the Belgian Minister at Paris, who (in their conversation of last Monday on this subject) had reminded him that the French view as to the right way of dealing with the question of a common Tariff for the Western States of the conventional Congo Basin had never been opposed by the Representatives of the Congo State in the Brussels Conference, adding that the opposition to it came entirely from England.

I told M. Ribot that such language on the part of Baron Beyens was irreconcilable with the solicitations addressed to Lord Vivian by Baron Lambertmont. His Excellency said he had no difficulty in believing that to be the case, nor in accounting for it. There was little doubt in his own mind that the Belgian Government had been speaking with

two voices, and this he attributed to the nervousness and restlessness of the King about all that concerns the Congo State.

In reply to some further questions from me, M. Ribot said that Baron Beyens had asked him not to be too exacting in reference to the reduction of the Congo export duties, representing the difficulties of the Congo State in this matter and the need of a revenue, which cannot be raised entirely from import duties. To this his Excellency had replied that, whenever the Belgian Government was ready to go into figures, he felt quite sure that they would soon arrive at a satisfactory agreement on all such points, as on his part there would be every disposition to do so. Baron Beyens had then assured him that the Belgian Government desired nothing better than to settle this Tariff question by negotiation between the States concerned, without reference to the Technical Commission, and without the "ingérence" of other Powers. Baron Beyens had also observed that the almost prohibitive export duties of the Congo State had been put on mainly for the purpose of frightening Holland, and that, as they had had precisely the contrary effect, he anticipated that their reduction, concurrently with an agreement with France and Portugal on the import Tariff, would go far to remove the opposition of the Dutch Government.

M. Ribot further informed me that, since I last saw him, M. Bourée had communicated to him the sketch of an entirely new set of proposals, concerted between M. Bourée and Lord Vivian; but that they were of a kind which it was not worth while to discuss.

Before taking leave of his Excellency I asked him what reply I was to give your Lordship on the proposal I had submitted to him; and, after requesting me to communicate to you his inquiries and observations in reference to it, he said that he would submit it to his colleagues, by whom it would, no doubt, be considered in connection with any further information that might be vouchsafed them on the points to which he had called my attention.

I have since, however, learned from Count Münster that M. Ribot has told my German colleague quite plainly that France cannot agree to the fixation of a Minimum Tariff.

I have, &c.
(Signed) LYTTON.

No. 274.

Question asked in the House of Commons, December 5, 1890.

Mr. Sidney Buxton,—To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is true, as reported, that the Government of the Netherlands has demanded an extension of the time given in which to sign the General Act and Declaration of the Brussels Conference:

And, whether Her Majesty's Government can afford the House any information as to the steps they have taken to overcome the reluctance of Holland to sign the General Act and Declaration of the Conference.

Answer.

No such demand has been made to our knowledge. It could only be addressed to the Conference.

Steps are being taken by Her Majesty's Government, in concert with the other Powers, to induce Holland to sign, but it is not at present possible to indicate their nature.

No. 275.

Mr. Gosselin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 5.)

(Ne. 65.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 5, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 69 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report that Baron Lambertmont has already been informed that the German Government raise no objection to the immediate settlement of the Tariff arrangements for the western zone of the Conventional Basin by direct negotiations between the three Powers territorially interested.

No. 276.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 375. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 5, 1890.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 363 of the 24th ultimo, I have to inform your Excellency that I have learnt from the German Embassy that the German Government entirely agree with the views recorded in that despatch as to the right of the Congo State to levy import duties for the suppression of the Slave Trade under Article III of the Act of Berlin.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 277.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 6.)*

(No. 14.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 5, 1890.

WITH reference to our despatch No. 12 of the 25th ultimo, we have the honour to transmit herewith three copies of the *procès-verbal*, reporting the proceedings of the Congo Duties Technical Committee, held on the 22nd ultimo.

We have, &c.
(For the British Delegates),
(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure in No. 277.

Minutes of Sitting of November 22, 1890.

Étaient présents :

M. le Baron Lambermont, Président ; M. le Comte d'Alvensleben ; M. Göhring ; M. le Comte Khevenhüller-Metsch ; M. Émile Banning ; M. Janssen ; M. Van Neuss ; Mr. E. H. Terrell ; M. Bourée ; M. de Chavannes ; Sir John Kirk ; Mr. Gosselin ; M. le Baron de Renzis ; M. le Chevalier Bardi ; M. le Baron Gericke de Herwynen ; M. le Comte de Macedo ; M. A. de Castilho ; M. le Prince Ouroussoff ; Carathéodory Effendi.

Assistait également à la séance : Lord Vivian.

M. le Président demande à M. le Ministre de France s'il serait disposé à faire connaître à l'assemblée les vues de son Gouvernement sur les questions soumises à son examen à la suite de la dernière séance.

M. Bourée, pour déférer au désir qui lui est exprimé, croit devoir donner lecture de la partie de ses instructions qui se rapporte aux questions dont il s'agit. Elle est conçue en ces termes :—

“ Nous sommes opposés à l'idée d'un Tarif commun tel qu'on l'a défini en dernier lieu ; nous ne pouvons admettre que l'échelle de nos taxes soit soumise pour le présent et pour l'avenir à l'approbation d'un grand nombre de Puissances non possessionnées dans la région visée. L'établissement de ces droits est fort délicat. Il s'agit de contrées imparfaitement connues, dont les ressources se développeront dans un ordre et avec une rapidité incertains. Des tâtonnements sont inévitables ; subordonner la réalisation de ces essais à l'entente générale et unanime d'un très grand nombre de Puissances serait la rendre impossible. Nous voulons bien assurément aider l'État du Congo à se procurer des ressources, et nous l'avons montré, mais nous ne saurions sacrifier pour cela les intérêts légitimes et évidents de notre commerce. Nous sommes tenus à d'autant plus de prudence et nous avons besoin de précautions d'autant plus grandes que la situation géographique de nos possessions accroît les difficultés de notre tâche. Ces territoires sont coupés par la ligne qui forme le bassin conventionnel du Congo ; les droits que nous aurons à établir devront être étendus à toute la région qui nous appartient et frapper ainsi des pays placés en dehors du

programme de la Commission elle-même. A défaut, des Douanes intérieures devraient être créées, ce qui ne serait pas pour nous une médiocre source d'embarras. Des questions de cet ordre, la valeur des concessions réciproques qui peuvent être consenties, les conditions d'établissement et de perception des droits ne sauraient être utilement étudiées que par les autorités directement intéressées. Aussi sommes-nous prêts à associer à notre travail celles qui se trouvent dans ce cas, c'est-à-dire les Puissances possessionnées à la Côte Occidentale, nos voisins, le Portugal et l'État Libre. Sous cette forme restreinte, nous sommes disposés à accueillir l'idée d'un Tarif commun et à en préparer l'élaboration. Il semble, surtout si l'on se rapporte aux déclarations que nous avons faites touchant la liberté absolue dont chacun devait jouir en matière de Tarifs, qu'il est difficile d'aller plus loin dans le sens des suggestions formulées par l'État Libre, et que la concession faite ainsi par nous n'est pas d'importance médiocre. Il ne paraît pas cependant, d'après les comptes rendus des séances de la Commission, qu'elle en ait apprécié la portée, suffisamment évidente pourtant.

"Quant à la procédure que nous recommandons pour la réalisation de nos vues, il est facile de se rendre compte de ce que nous voulons dire par une entente de Cabinet à Cabinet. La chose est absolument claire; nous voulons soustraire notre Tarif à la Commission et à toute réunion ou Sous-Commission recevant d'elle son mandat. Nous comptons échanger nos vues avec les Chancelleries intéressées ou avec leurs Représentants pourvu que ceux-ci agissent en cette capacité et non, si ce sont les mêmes personnes, en tant que membres de la Commission. Des pourparlers préliminaires devront sans doute avoir lieu de Cabinet à Cabinet, et quand les bases d'une entente seront trouvées, des Délégués spéciaux, soit les Agents à Bruxelles des pays intéressés, soit d'autres, régleront le détail. Le tout peut se faire assez rapidement si nous trouvons, comme nous l'espérons, dans ces pourparlers, autant de bonne volonté que nous sommes disposés à en apporter nous-mêmes.

"C'est dans un esprit non moins conciliant que nous envisageons la phase actuelle des négociations de Bruxelles. Nous entendons, pour chaque cas où des réserves sont nécessaires, les limiter aux bornes les plus étroites, à celles que le souci des intérêts de nos nationaux rend clairement nécessaires. Nous n'avons nullement l'intention de nous opposer à ce que les Puissances règlent, par le moyen d'une Sous-Commission, le Tarif commun applicable à la Côte Orientale où nous n'avons pas de possessions, et si un mandat de la Commission elle-même est nécessaire pour que ces travaux soient entrepris, nous consentons à ce qu'il soit donné. La seule réserve que nous ayons à faire, et elle est évidente, est que cette décision conciliante ne puisse en aucun cas, pour ce qui concerne nos intérêts de la côte ouest, nous être opposée comme formant précédent envers nous."

M. Bourée ne doute pas que la clarté de ces explications ne permette à tous de se rendre compte du véritable caractère des propositions du Gouvernement Français et de l'attitude qu'il n'a cessé d'observer en ce qui concerne l'œuvre généreuse due à l'initiative du Souverain de l'État Libre du Congo.

M. le Comte de Macedo rappelle la proposition suggérée antérieurement par lui, et tendant à fixer, pour les droits d'entrée de chaque groupe, un maximum au-dessous duquel chaque Puissance pourrait tarifier à son gré. Il persiste à croire que cette proposition serait de nature à satisfaire aux objections présentées par le Gouvernement Français et à rallier l'opinion des autres Gouvernements. Il prie en conséquence M. le Président de vouloir bien la soumettre à l'assemblée dans une prochaine séance.

M. le Ministre du Portugal ajoute qu'il n'est guidé que par un esprit de conciliation. Personnellement, il pourrait se rallier aux vues émises par M. le Ministre de France, mais, comme celles-ci soulèvent des difficultés, il y a lieu, selon lui, de rechercher une solution intermédiaire de nature à arriver à une entente.

M. le Comte de Macedo saisit cette occasion pour déclarer qu'il désire faire partie du Sous-Comité qui examinerait les Tarifs de la Côte Occidentale. Quant à celui qui serait institué pour la Côte Orientale, s'il n'a pas demandé à participer à ses travaux, c'est parce que ce Comité est compétent seulement pour les territoires du bassin conventionnel du Congo auxquels ne s'appliquent pas les réserves admises par la Conférence de Berlin en ce qui concerne la franchise des droits d'importation.

M. Bourée répond à M. le Ministre de Portugal que sa proposition aurait un caractère transactionnel, si la divergence d'opinion ne portait que sur les chiffres du Tarif; mais, en réalité, on est divisé sur une question de principe. M. le Ministre de France n'est pas en situation de dire si les idées émises par M. de Macedo s'accorderaient avec la manière de voir du Gouvernement Français. Il conserve un doute à cet égard, ayant lui-même entretenu déjà son Gouvernement d'une combinaison jusqu'à un certain point analogue.

M. le Comte de Macedo dit qu'en rappelant la proposition qu'il avait faite dans une séance antérieure, il ignorait cette circonstance.

M. le Président est d'avis que le système intermédiaire suggéré par *M. le Comte de Macedo* ne doit pas nécessairement être discuté dans la présente séance. Il trouvera sa place dans l'examen des Tarifs à convenir, après que l'entente se sera établie sur la procédure à suivre pour l'élaboration de ces Tarifs. C'est de cette procédure qu'il s'agit dans les instructions dont *M. le Ministre de France* a donné lecture. Mais la question est trop importante pour qu'il soit possible à la Commission d'émettre dès à présent un avis; il serait conforme aux précédents de laisser aux Gouvernements le temps de se prononcer.

Quant au second point dont s'occupent les instructions de *M. Bourée*, une décision pourrait être prise dès maintenant. Rien ne s'oppose plus à ce que le Sous-Comité chargé d'élaborer le Tarif pour la Côte Orientale se constitue et pousse son travail aussi loin qu'il le jugera convenable.

Lord Vivian a compris l'exposé fait par *M. Bourée* en ce sens que le Gouvernement Français n'élève aucune objection à ce que le Sous-Comité pour la Côte Orientale commence immédiatement ses travaux. En ce qui concerne la Côte Occidentale, *M. le Ministre de France* déclare, dès maintenant, ne pouvoir admettre que le Tarif élaboré de commun accord par les trois Puissances établies à cette côte soit soumis à l'approbation de la Commission. *Lord Vivian* estime que la procédure proposée par le Cabinet de Paris est en contradiction avec les vues de la grande majorité de la Commission, et il ne comprend pas comment elle se concilierait avec ce que réclamait le Représentant des États-Unis dans la séance du 18 Novembre. Tout en étant très désireux de ne susciter aucune difficulté nouvelle, *M. le Ministre d'Angleterre* croit nécessaire qu'on aboutisse à une solution de nature à satisfaire tous les Gouvernements intéressés, dont l'adhésion est indispensable.

M. Bourée fait remarquer que les deux zones du bassin conventionnel se trouvent dans des conditions très différentes, comme l'a reconnu la Commission. Il lui semble qu'il doit en résulter une différence dans la méthode de procéder pour chacune des deux côtes.

On pourrait donc commencer dès à présent l'élaboration du Tarif pour la Côte Orientale, tout en admettant que ce travail ne devra pas être conduit de la même manière pour la côte opposée. Dans la dernière séance, *M. le Président* a paru envisager ainsi la marche à suivre. Rien n'empêcherait de résoudre les questions sur lesquelles on est d'accord, sauf à réserver celles qui donnent lieu à des divergences d'opinion. Il va sans dire, d'ailleurs, que si l'entente ne pouvait s'établir sur un arrangement final, le travail qui aurait été fait pour la Côte Orientale serait frappé de caducité.

M. le Président ne pense pas qu'avant l'examen des propositions Françaises par les divers Gouvernements, il soit possible de trouver une issue aux difficultés signalées par *Lord Vivian*.

M. Bourée déclare que si la Commission décide la formation d'un Sous-Comité pour la Côte Orientale, il retire les réserves qu'il a faites à la séance précédente, et s'associe au mandat collectif qui sera donné à ce Sous-Comité.

M. le Président croit devoir revenir un instant sur le cas des États-Unis. Sans vouloir donner un conseil à cet égard, il croit que le moment de régler la question en ce qui concerne le Gouvernement Américain ne viendra que plus tard. Il a été entendu, en effet, que l'arrangement spécial que l'État Indépendant du Congo conclurait avec les États-Unis aurait la forme d'un Traité de Commerce, et que la négociation de cet accord permettrait aux États-Unis d'obtenir les avantages qu'ils recherchent en échange de la Concession qu'ils ont faite sur les droits d'entrée.

A ce point de vue, plus le Tarif qu'on établira dans l'État du Congo sera libéral, plus aisément pourra-t-il servir de base à l'arrangement dont il s'agit. Les États-Unis n'ayant pas de Traité spécial avec tous les États du bassin conventionnel, leur intérêt évident demandait l'adoption d'un Tarif Général. La question eût été ainsi résolue pour ce qui les concerne. Mais, dès maintenant, on peut tenir pour certain que les Puissances ayant des possessions à la Côte Orientale seront amenées à s'entendre sur un Tarif commun. Le résultat que poursuit le Gouvernement Américain sera donc atteint de ce côté. En ce qui regarde la région occidentale, on peut déduire des déclarations faites par *M. le Ministre de France* qu'il sera possible d'y établir également un Tarif commun, ce qui faciliterait aussi l'entente avec les États-Unis. Quant à la recherche de la formule propre à la réaliser, il est permis d'espérer qu'elle ne rencontrera pas de difficultés insurmontables.

M. le Président désire répondre quelques mots à l'une des observations présentées par *M. le Comte de Macedo*. Il a toujours été admis, sans aucune contestation, que l'on maintiendrait intactes les réserves résultant du Traité de Berlin et relatives à la liberté de

tarifier dans certaines possessions du bassin conventionnel appartenant au Portugal ou à d'autres Puissances de la Côte Orientale d'Afrique.

MM. les Délégués d'Allemagne, d'Angleterre, et d'Italie se déclarent prêts, sous les réserves indiquées précédemment, à se constituer en Sous-Comité pour l'élaboration du Tarif à la Côte Orientale.

Lord Vivian dit que les Délégués Britanniques, en consentant à discuter le Tarif de la Côte Orientale dans un Sous-Comité, sans attendre la nomination d'un Sous-Comité analogue pour la Côte Occidentale, donnent la preuve de l'esprit de conciliation qui les anime. Son Excellence a éprouvé une vive satisfaction lorsque M. Bourée a déclaré que la France admettait que le Sous-Comité de la Côte Orientale reçût un mandat de la Commission elle-même. Les Délégués Britanniques regrettent toutefois que le Gouvernement Français, en faisant cette déclaration, l'ait accompagnée du refus de soumettre à l'approbation de la Commission Plénière le Tarif qui serait élaboré pour la Côte Occidentale. *Lord Vivian* ne veut aujourd'hui soulever aucune objection à cet égard, mais il craint qu'il n'y ait là un obstacle très sérieux au succès des travaux de la Commission.

M. le Président invite les Délégués des Puissances de la Côte Orientale à se réunir en Comité après la séance; les Délégués des autres Puissances pourront, ainsi qu'il a été entendu, assister, s'ils le désirent, aux travaux de ce Comité.

La séance est levée.

Le Président,
(Signé) Baron LAMBERMONT.

Les Secrétaires,
(Signé) L. ARENDT.
A. DE CUVELIER.
CH. SEEGER.

No. 278.

Mr. Gosselin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

(No. 289. Slave Trade Conference. Very Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 5, 1890.

ON inquiry to-day of Baron Lambermont whether he had any news from Paris, he replied that he had not seen M. Bourée, the French Minister, for the last fortnight, and was still completely in the dark as to the modifications of the export Decrees and licences desired by the French Government.

He had begged M. de Chavannes, the Second French Delegate, who left yesterday morning for Paris, to inform M. Ribot that it would be impossible to delay the negotiations much longer, that it was now a matter more of hours than of days, and that he urgently requested that an immediate answer should be sent to the repeated communications addressed to the French Government through the Belgian Legation in Paris.

He has this morning been informed that M. Bourée would probably call on him this afternoon, and he trusted that, at last, the Congo Government would learn the precise nature of the grievances complained of.

Reverting to the remonstrances which have been privately made by the Belgian Companies engaging in the Congo trade, Baron Lambermont said that they had loyally refrained from joining in the cry raised by their French and Dutch competitors, but that they were undoubtedly much more seriously hit by the Decrees than any of the foreign commercial Companies. They had sunk in the business a capital of over 23,000,000 fr.; and the "Société du Haut-Congo," in which M. Sabatier, the Member for Charleroi, and Captain Thys are deeply interested, would have to be wound up, unless immediate financial redress were accorded. This (as I reported in my despatch No. 288, Slave Trade Conference, of the 2nd instant) His Majesty has consented to do; and Baron Lambermont hopes that the concession, voluntarily made by the King to his own subjects, which will naturally be extended to the traders of all nationalities, will suffice to satisfy also the demands of the French Government.

I gathered that these modifications, which are to remain in force for a period of ten years, will be communicated to the general meeting of the Belgian Company on the 15th instant, and will be made known at the same time to the Powers, either by Circular despatch or by means of a Royal Decree.

Baron Lambermont begged that your Lordship would consider this communication as strictly confidential, as it was of importance that the French Government should not

have any knowledge of the King's intentions until they had communicated their own demands.

"I do not wish," said the Baron, "that the French Government should get to the bottom of our sack, until at least we know the contents of theirs."

Baron Lambermont added that he had heard yesterday that the German Government did not object to direct negotiations between the three Congo Governments for a settlement of the Tariff or Tariffs for the western zone; and, in view of your Lordship's telegram No. 69 of yesterday, I informed him that, to the best of my belief, Her Majesty's Government were ready to assent to an immediate settlement of this question by means of negotiations "de Cabinet à Cabinet" between the three Western States.

I have, &c.

(Signed) MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 279.

[Nil.]

No. 280.

Society of Friends to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

*'Devonshire House, 12, Bishopsgate Without, London,
December 5, 1890.*

My Lord,

I AM directed to forward you the Memorial of the Executive Committee of the Society of Friends, sent herewith.

I am, &c.

(Signed) ISAAC SHARP, *Secretary.*

Inclosure in No. 280.

Memorial.

To the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Memorial of the Executive Committee of the Society of Friends respectfully sheweth as follows :

THE Society of Friends has, as is well known, for more than a century past, been earnest in its efforts for the suppression of the Slave Trade and slavery. It was,

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therefore, with great interest and thankfulness that we learned that, on the initiative of the British Government, and in response to an invitation from the King of the Belgians, a Conference had been summoned at Brussels to consider measures for effectually dealing with the African Slave Trade.

2. Whilst the Conference was sitting, we felt it our duty to send to Brussels a deputation and Memorial praying that measures might be adopted, not only for the suppression of the Slave Trade itself, but for the restriction of the traffics in arms, gunpowder, and intoxicating liquor, which serve so largely as feeders to the Slave Trade. We were glad to know that, in taking this course, we were in harmony with the views enforced on the Conference by the British Plenipotentiaries. We have been gratified to find that valuable provisions to this effect have been embodied in the General Act of the Conference, though, with regard to the traffic in alcoholic liquors, we regret that the restrictions imposed fall far short of those that were urged by the British and American representatives.

3. We learn, with extreme regret, that differences on a question outside the main scope of the Conference have hitherto prevented the General Act from coming into effect. We understand that the Government of the Netherlands, whilst willing to subscribe to the General Act, including all the valuable provisions for the repression of the Slave Trade on land and by sea, declines to agree to the proposal of the Free State, that import duties not exceeding 10 per cent., prohibited by the Congo Treaty of 1885, should now be imposed.

4. We fear that the levy of an *ad valorem* duty on all, or nearly all, articles of merchandize, is likely to have an injurious effect on the extension of legitimate commerce, which we have ever regarded as one of the most important means for the suppression of the Slave Trade. It will also impose on the missionary bodies at present labouring on the Congo, who have done so much for the civilization of that vast region, a very serious additional charge.

5. We are informed that the Netherlands Government, which at the Conference opposed the imposition of import duties on alcoholic liquors, is now willing to consent to a much higher rate of duty than that fixed by the Conference; also, that it will agree to any other proposal, either in the way of a joint contribution or of export or import duties on a few specified and important articles of commerce, that may be found needful to enable the Congo Free State fully to carry out the measures proposed by the Conference.

6. Under these circumstances, we would respectfully urge that the British Government use its influence to obtain, within the period still remaining for the signature of the General Act, such a modification of the proposal of the Congo Free State as will meet all reasonable objections of the Netherlands Government, and, at the same time, provide a more effectual check on the trade in alcoholic liquors than is likely to be the result of the decision of the Brussels Conference as it now stands. We cannot suppose that such an arrangement will meet with serious objection from any of the Powers which have taken part in the humanitarian work of the Conference; and we hope that any modified arrangements thus agreed to may be carried out by diplomatic correspondence with the several Powers, so as to obviate the necessity of summoning a fresh Conference. We have great confidence that the Government will use its best efforts to bring the labours of the Brussels Conference to a successful issue.

(Signed on behalf and by direction of the Committee aforesaid),

(Signed) CALEB R. KEMP, Clerk.

London, December 5, 1890.

No. 281.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 8.)

(No. 15.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 6, 1890.

SIR JOHN KIRK informed Baron Lambertmont yesterday evening that, to meet the views of the French Government, we are authorized to agree to an arrangement being come to "de Cabinet à Cabinet" between the three Congo Powers territorially interested in the western zone, the result so arrived at to be communicated to the Commission, provided that the agreement in question maintained freedom of transit and

precluded any differential treatment, that natives and foreigners should be dealt with alike, and that the 10 per cent. limit should in no case be exceeded.

The Baron told us this morning that the Belgian Companies had placed themselves in direct communication with the French houses interested, and that there was every probability that the Concession which the King would make in answer to the appeal from his own subjects would remove all cause of dissatisfaction in France. Negotiations would be opened here early next week with the representatives of the French houses interested, and the Baron hopes that the whole question of the export duties and licences—which is the one vital point in the negotiations with France—would be cleared up very shortly to the satisfaction of all concerned.

We were given to understand that the Congo Government is ready to reduce the tax on ivory from 4 fr. the kilog. to half that amount, to be levied, not, as at present, by weight, but *ad valorem*, this change being called for by the merchants owing to the great difference in price that exists between elephants' tusks of different kinds and sizes. It is also proposed to reduce by two-thirds the personal licences and taxes.

The Baron appeared to think that the French Government would accept the draft Tariff submitted to the Commission by the Congo Government, with possibly a few minor alterations, and that there would be no further question of assimilating the new Tariff for the French Congo with that already in force in the Colony of Gaboon, which lies outside the conventional basin.

We pointed out that the position held by the United States' Government must not be lost sight of during the negotiation, and that no arrangement arrived at could be held binding until it had been accepted by that Power.

The President is of opinion that nothing would be gained by convoking the Commission until the agreement between France and the Independent State of the Congo shall have taken a definite form, and he named Thursday as the earliest date at which a meeting would be possible.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 282.

Sir E. Malet to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 8.)

(No. 145. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Berlin, December 6, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 113, Africa, of the 4th instant, and to the proposal of Her Majesty's Government that Lord Lytton and Count Münster should assent to the immediate settlement of the Tariff in territories on the West Coast of Africa in the possession of France and Portugal and the Congo State, Baron Marschall told me yesterday that he had agreed to this course, as he was content to accept any proposition which met with the concurrence of the Belgian authorities. His Excellency said that he was glad of the assurance which M. Ribot had given, that he had no intention of taking an unfair advantage of the position of the Congo State, but he fancied that M. Ribot's views had probably been materially changed by the communication to him of your Lordship's opinion, supported by the German Government, that the State had the power, under the Articles III and IV of the Final Act of the Congo Conference, to levy duties.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWARD B. MALET.

No. 283.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 8.)

(No. 63. Africa. Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 7, 1890.

THE German Minister told me yesterday in confidence that the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar had expressed to him his readiness to speak to Queen Emma on the subject of the difficulties caused by the Netherlands Government in the affair of the Congo duties. The

Grand Duke had added that he felt sure that the Queen would take a reasonable view of the question, and would duly appreciate the serious inconveniences which might be entailed on this country by the stubborn attitude of its Government.

Baron Saurma said that under the present circumstances he had thought it best not to avail himself of the offer of the Grand Duke.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 284.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 8.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

The Hague, December 8, 1890.

BARON SAURMA, the German Minister here, had an interview with M. Hartsen this morning, when the latter informed him that his Government had now decided to give way in the question of the Congo duties. They were not prepared, he said, to make a formal promise to that effect, but they considered that they would be able to justify their surrender in the eyes of their countrymen if they could receive an answer to their counter-proposals through the medium of the Belgian Government.

I may add, in the strictest confidence, that Baron Saurma informed me that the Government had been considerably influenced in arriving at this decision by the personal influence of Queen Emma.

No. 285.

The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.

(No. 292. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, December 8, 1890.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch No. 169 of the 3rd instant, respecting the proposed fixation of a Tariff for the Western Congo Basin, and I have to inform you that I approve the language held by you on the subject to M. Ribot.

I would remark that Her Majesty's Government have never expressed their approval of a Minimum Tariff in principle, but that they declared themselves willing to assent to it if it were held to be the only solution of the difficulties connected with the fiscal arrangements in the western basin, inasmuch as, having no territories which would be affected by it, their own policy would not have been governed by their assent.

Your Excellency will have learnt from my telegram No. 14 of the 4th instant that in face of the objections which have been raised by the French Government, Her Majesty's Government agree to a common Tariff to be settled "de Cabinet à Cabinet" and submitted without delay to the Commission for adoption or rejection.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 286.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 9.)

(No. 64. Africa. Very Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 8, 1890.

I HAVE just returned from the sitting of the States-General, at which Her Majesty Queen Emma took the oaths as Regent of the Kingdom during Queen Wilhelmina's minority. The whole Diplomatic Body were present on the occasion, and the German Minister took me aside for a moment and informed me that M. Hartsen, whom he had had occasion to see this morning on some business of no particular importance, had of his own accord stated to him that the Dutch Government had now really made up their minds to give in in the affair of the Congo duties. They could not, M. Hartsen had explained, give a formal undertaking to that effect beforehand, but if they could only obtain replies from the Powers, to be sent through the Belgian Government, to the counter-proposals they had made, they would then be

in a position to justify the change in their attitude before public opinion. This modicum of concession, your Lordship will not fail to observe, is what they might probably have obtained a few weeks ago, with the additional satisfaction of a Conference *ad hoc* to examine their proposals.

I asked my colleague how this sudden collapse could be accounted for. He replied that he thought that our joint action had in some degree contributed to it, but he would tell me in strict confidence that the personal intervention of the Queen Regent had, he believed, produced a great effect upon the Ministers. It seems that the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar of his own initiative spoke earnestly to Her Majesty of the bad effect which the contumacy of the Dutch Government was producing at the chief European Courts, and that he found Queen Emma very ready to listen to his warnings. Her Majesty had then given orders that the papers connected with the affair should be laid before her, and had been occupied with their perusal for the last two days.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 287.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 70. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 9, 1890.

I HAVE received following telegram from Her Majesty's Minister at the Hague:—

[See No. 284.]

Your Lordship is at liberty, as the Netherlands Government are reported to wish the replies to their counter-proposals to be conveyed through the Belgian Government, to send in, after consultation with Baron Lamermont, the British refusal of those proposals in the sense indicated in my despatch No. 262 of the

Your Lordship should add in regard to spirits that Her Majesty's Government is aware that it is impracticable to reopen the question of the decision of the Conference as to spirit duties.

No. 288.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 9.)

(No. 66. Slave Trade Conference.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 9, 1890, 10 P.M.

I HAVE confidentially communicated to Baron Lamermont the substance of your Lordship's telegram No. 70 of to-day, informing me of the intention of the Netherlands Government to give way on the question of the Declaration relative to the Congo import duties.

The Baron requested me to lose no time in communicating to his Government your Lordship's reply to the counter-proposals submitted by the Netherlands Government. He will at once instruct the Belgian Representatives abroad, by telegraph, to ask the other Signatory Powers of the Berlin Act to send in their replies forthwith.

No. 289.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.**

(No. 334.)

Foreign Office, December 9, 1890.

[Transmits copy of Mr. Gosselin's No. 289 of December 5, 1890: *ante*, No. 278.]

No. 290.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 10.)

(No. 67. Slave Trade Conference. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 10, 1890.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 66 of yesterday, relative to the Congo import duties, Baron Lambermont told me to-day that he hoped the British and German Representatives accredited to the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Act would be instructed by telegraph to urge those Governments to reply immediately to the Netherlands counter-proposals through the Belgian Government.

He suggested that the instructions might confidentially explain the urgent reason for immediate attention to this request.

Count Alvensleben, my German colleague, is telegraphing to Berlin in the same sense.

The Belgian Government have received from Berlin confirmation of the information as to the intentions of the Netherlands Government contained in your Lordship's telegram No. 70 of the 9th instant.

No. 291.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 10.)

(No. 68. Slave Trade Conference. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 10, 1890.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 66 of the 9th instant, Baron Lambermont informs me that he does not feel authorized, in instructing the Belgian Representatives abroad to ask for immediate answers to the counter-proposals of the Netherlands Government, to explain to them the real reason for the urgency of this respect, and that he has therefore desired them, before acting on the instructions (which were to be telegraphed to-day), to put themselves in previous communication with their German and British colleagues.

He added that he attached special importance to obtaining Lord Lytton's support, with a full knowledge of the facts, to the request to the above effect which the Belgian Minister at Paris will address to the French Government.

No. 292.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.**

(No. 16. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 10, 1890.

UNLESS Holland signs by the 1st January the Final Act of the Brussels Conference, that Act will fall through. Hitherto she has declined, objecting to the Declaration annexed thereto respecting the levying of import duties in the conventional basin of the Congo. Counter-proposals were made by her, in which she suggested that the Powers should subscribe to give the Congo State a revenue, or should assent to increased duties being imposed on spirits.

It is now understood that Holland will sign if satisfied that the counter-proposals are rejected by the Powers. They must fail, as they have already been objected to by several of the Powers.

You should urge the Minister for Foreign Affairs to send an immediate reply with the least possible delay through the Belgian Government, in order that the Act may be saved.

* Also to Sir A. Paget, Sir Clare Ford, Mr. MacDonell, Sir J. Pouncefote, Lord Dufferin, Sir G. Petre (No. 86), Sir R. Morier, Sir F. Plunkett, and Sir W. White.

No. 293.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 116.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 10, 1890, 7.20 P.M.

SLAVE TRADE Conference at Brussels.

The preceding telegram has been sent to all the Powers Signatories of the Act of Berlin.

I have to request you to urge the Minister for Foreign Affairs to support the representations which we have made on the subject.

No. 294.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(No. 30. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 10, 1890.

COUNT BYLANDT has pressed upon me very earnestly the importance to Holland of an official answer to their proposals, determined on at the Conference itself. This was necessary, he said, to justify the Netherlands Government in face of their own countrymen, and was the condition precedent to any conciliatory action on their part.

I said that the Belgian Government had pressed Her Majesty's Government for their official answer, and that the latter were about to give it; but that I doubted whether the Slave Trade Conference could meet again. Its work was finished, and only required completion in this one point, that it still wanted the signature of the Netherlands Minister.

I then drew his attention to the obscurity which hung over the language of the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Hague upon this matter. Some time ago Sir H. Rumbold had, I said, reported an assurance from him that the Dutch Government intended to give way if its proposals were not accepted. This was afterwards contradicted. Again yesterday I had been informed that a similar assurance had been now given to the German Minister, but I pointed out that he, Count Bylandt, evidently knew nothing of this resolution, and was holding entirely different language.

I said I thought the affair had been retarded by this doubt as to the view of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I further told Count Bylandt that I did not take the view of the Final Congo Act which commended itself to the Dutch Government, and on which their recent policy was based.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 295.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 11.)

(No. 65. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 10, 1890.

YOUR Lordship is aware that since the King's death, which has entirely absorbed public attention here, I have made it a point to refrain from touching upon the Congo question in my interviews with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Having, however, occasion to see M. Hartsen yesterday, I incidentally asked him whether anything new had occurred of late in regard to this affair, and ventured to remind him that the delay allowed to the Dutch Government was fast coming to an end.

Although his Excellency showed some reserve in his reply, and did not actually give me to understand, as he seems to have done to my German colleague, that the Dutch Government were now prepared to give way, he admitted that a decision would speedily have to be come to.

For that reason, he said, he hoped that some answer would soon be returned to the Dutch counter-proposals by the various Governments to whom they had been submitted, and he supposed that their replies would reach him through the Belgian Government. He and his colleagues would then be able finally to determine the course that should be adopted as regarded the signature of the Declaration, and he significantly added that their

disposition was most conciliatory. His Excellency further observed that the Queen Regent had asked for the whole correspondence relating to this affair, which was extremely voluminous.

Before leaving his Excellency, I took upon myself to give him a warning as to the expediency of this Government receding from their actual position. There was considerable danger, I said, that they might find that position much less strong than they at present imagined, and as a mere point of sound strategy they would be wise in shifting their ground before it was too late.

I understand from M. Hartsen that he has applied through Count Bylandt for an early reply to his counter-proposals.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 296.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 11.)

(No. 15. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, December 11, 1890, noon.

I AM informed by M. Ribot, in reference to the Western Congo Tariff, that an agreement has been arrived at between him and the Belgian Minister, fixing a 6 per cent. duty on all imports, without distinction of origin, with the exception of arms, munitions, and salt, on which it is proposed to levy a 10 per cent. duty in accordance, it is understood, with the wishes of the Conference. Minister for Foreign Affairs tells me that the Belgian Government approve of a 10 per cent. export duty in French Congo, and that it is intended to reduce to the same rate the export duties of the Congo State.

No. 297.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 11.)

(No. 17. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, December 11, 1890, 1.25 P.M.

THE Dutch Government has already been informed by the French Government that the latter cannot assent to the Dutch counter-proposals. It is believed that the French Minister at Brussels has already notified to the Belgian Government the rejection of these proposals, but in the event of its being necessary he will be instructed to repeat the notification.

No. 298.

Sir E. Malet to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 11.)

(No. 91. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Berlin, December 11, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegrams Nos. 115 and 116 of the 10th instant, respecting the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels, Baron Marschall will forthwith declare the rejection of the Dutch proposals by the German Government in a despatch which will be communicated to the Belgian Government.

No. 299.

Sir A. Paget to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 11.)

(Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Vienna, December 11, 1890.

COUNT KÁLNOKY is unable to give a reply at once to your Lordship's telegram on the subject of the Brussels Slave Trade Conference, but he will acquaint himself more fully with the circumstances, and hopes to be able to send instructions which will be in accordance with your Lordship's wishes.

No. 300†.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Commission to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 12.)*

(No. 16.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 11, 1890.

REFERRING to our despatches Nos. 9 and 11 of the 19th and 23rd ultimo, we have the honour to submit a revised draft of the proposed Import Tariff to be applied to the eastern part of the conventional basin of the Congo, subject to the operation of Article IV of the Berlin Act of 1885.

This draft has been prepared in concert by the British, German, and Italian Delegates for submission to their respective Governments.

All intention of making the import duty obligatory, as was at first insisted on by the German Delegates, having been abandoned, the system in force on the East Coast under the existing Commercial Treaties with Zanzibar has been referred to and adopted in the present Memorandum, and no reference is made (as was the case in the Memorandum inclosed in our despatch No. 9 above referred to) to internal frontiers, where each Power will be free to impose duties or not, as it thinks fit.

Under this system a duty not exceeding 5 per cent. may be levied upon all goods, but no obligation exists or is implied, either in the Commercial Treaties or in the present draft Memorandum, rendering the collection of such duties anywhere compulsory.

The only exceptions allowed are :—

1. Arms and ammunition which, in the event of an agreement being come to between the Powers having Treaties with Zanzibar which now limit the duty to 5 per cent., may be taxed with the full amount allowed by the Brussels Declaration.

2. Spirits, the duty on which has been provided for by the General Act itself.

3. Implements and machinery which are already exempted by the existing Zanzibar Treaties.

Provision is made to allow of a possible revision of this Agreement at the expiration of successive quinquennial periods, failing which the present system will continue in force.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure in No. 300†.

PROPOSED TARIFF FOR ORIENTAL ZONE.

*Revised Draft Agreement prepared for submission to their respective Governments by the
British, German, and Italian Delegates, December 11, 1890.*

CONFORMÉMENT aux dispositions de la Déclaration signée à Bruxelles le 2 Juillet, 1890, ainsi qu'à l'Acte Général de la Conférence de la même date, la Grande-Bretagne, l'Allemagne, et l'Italie sont tombées d'accord pour modifier dans les limites de la zone orientale du bassin conventionnel du Congo, l'Article IV de l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Berlin de 1885, tout en restant dans les conditions prévues dans la dite Déclaration.

1. Les Puissances susdites auront le droit de prélever, dans les territoires sous leur influence respective situés dans la zone orientale du bassin conventionnel du Congo, et soumis à l'Article IV de l'Acte Général de Berlin, des droits sur les marchandises importées dans ces territoires, soit par voie de terre, soit par voie d'eau, conformément au régime douanier actuellement en vigueur d'après les Traités avec le Zanzibar, qui prévoient un droit d'entrée de 5 pour cent *ad valorem*.

2. Les armes et munitions introduites selon les dispositions spéciales de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles pourront cependant être grevées d'un droit qui ne dépasse pas le

taux de 10 pour cent *ad valorem*, si les stipulations des Traités qui s'y opposent actuellement seraient modifiées, et si les circonstances le permettraient.

3. Le droit d'entrée à prélever sur les alcools sera réglé selon les dispositions du Chapitre VI de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles.

4. Les marchandises suivantes seront admises en franchise de douane à savoir :—

Machines et instruments destinés à l'agriculture; ainsi que tous les matériaux destinés à la construction et au maintien des routes, tramways, et chemins de fer, et en général tous les moyens de transport.

5. Le présent accord restera en vigueur pendant une période de cinq ans, et demeurera valable pour cinq autres années et ainsi de suite de cinq ans à cinq ans, à moins que l'une ou l'autre des trois Puissances en demanderait la revision, six mois avant l'expiration de la période quinquennale.

His Excellency has been informed that public feeling in Holland is strongly supporting the Government in not signing the Act, and that should they be obliged to resign, the Queen-Regent might incur much unpopularity at the commencement of her rule in changing Ministers as a concession to pressure from abroad.

No. 300.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 11.)

(No. 69. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 11, 1890, 7 P.M.

THE Belgian Government have just received the French proposals for a common Tariff for the group of Powers in the western zone of the Congo Basin to be substituted for the project of Tariff submitted to the Technical Commission by the Congo Government.

The following is the outline of these proposals :—

Import Tariff.—Arms and salt, 10 per cent.; all other articles 6 per cent. *ad valorem*.

(The Tariff may only be modified by common agreement between the three interested Powers.)

Export Tariff.—Ivory and india-rubber both 10 per cent. *ad valorem*, which is about equivalent to the reductions which the King was prepared to make in the increased export duties recently established.

The licence tax for the sale of spirits is to be reduced.

These proposals have already been accepted by Portugal, and, if they are agreed to here, the French Government offer to put strong pressure on Holland to induce her to yield.

I am told that a verbal answer to the French proposals will be given to-morrow at Paris, and that the details of the agreement will be recorded by an exchange of notes between the three interested Powers.

The Government of the Congo State concur generally in the above proposals, but may probably suggest a modification of the duty on salt and the lowering of the duty on tissues to 5 per cent. in order to satisfy Holland, as well as the exemption from duty of certain articles.

No. 300*.

Mr. MacDonell to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 11, 7 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Copenhagen, December 11, 1890, 5.45 P.M.

I AM assured that the Danish Government have already made known through the Belgian Minister their distinct refusal to subscribe to a revenue for the Congo State. As regards the question of the proposed increase of the spirit duties, they will adhere to the views of the majority of the Powers.

The Danish Representative has been instructed to express himself in this sense to the Belgian Government.

No. 301.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 12.)

(No. 70. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 12, 1890, 11 A.M.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 299, Africa, relative to the attitude of Holland in regard to the Congo duties, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that, after consultation with Baron Lambertmont, I have addressed a note to Prince de Chimay in the sense of the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch No. 262 of the 4th ultimo, as amended by your telegram No. 70 of the 9th instant, conveying the answer of Her Majesty's Government to the counter-proposals of the Netherlands Government for indemnifying the Congo State for the expenses it will incur in the suppression of the Slave Trade.

No. 302.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 12, 3 P.M.)

(Africa. Secret.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, December 12, 1890, 12.20 P.M.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram to me of the 10th instant on the subject of the Brussels Conference, I have the honour to report that the Minister for Foreign Affairs gave the same reply to my communication to the Porte as had previously been given to the Belgian Minister at this Court by his Excellency, viz.: That the Government of Turkey certainly could not give its consent to any payment, but that with respect to the counter-proposals his Excellency does not see any necessity for a new Conference in principle; he will, moreover, abstain from sending instructions to his Representative at Brussels in any sense till the Porte has heard the views of other Powers interested.

This reply is considered by the Belgian Minister as intended to gain time, our object, on the other hand, being to arrive at a solution in such a way as to impress Holland before the 31st December. This being the case, I propose to make urgent representations to the Grand Vizier in this sense, but I much regret that no instructions have hitherto been received on the subject by my German and Austrian colleagues.

The views of the French Embassy are, as is well known, adverse, and the influence of the Palace is sure to be opposed to a Treaty having for its object the abolition of slavery.

No. 303.

Sir R. Morier to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 12, 3.30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, December 12, 1890, 2.20 P.M.

WITH reference to your telegram of the 10th: Brussels Conference.

The instructions of the Russian Minister at Hague are not to take initiative or put himself forward, as the Russian Government are not materially interested in the question, but to act in every way to prevent collapse of Conference, in conjunction with the other Powers. The counter-proposals are considered by M. de Giers to be impracticable, but he does not wish to appear to take the lead in a sense apparently adverse to Holland by sending fresh instructions, as it was Russian Government by which Holland had been strongly urged not to separate herself from Technical Commission. The instructions to Russian Minister at Hague are, M. de Giers is convinced, amply sufficient to secure his acting in conformity with the wishes expressed by your Lordship.

No. 304.

Sir A. Paget to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 12, 7.30 P.M.)

(Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Vienna, December 12, 1890, 6 P.M.

IN reference to my telegram of yesterday on the subject of the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels, I have the honour to state that Count Kálnoky informed Prince Reuss to-day, when the latter made representations similar to mine of yesterday, that he had already sent instructions to the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Brussels to concert with his German and English colleagues as to the reply to be given through the Belgian Government to that of Holland in the desired sense.

His Excellency requested my German colleague to give me this information.

No. 305.

Sir J. Pauncefote to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 12, 9 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Washington, December 12, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of 10th instant: Brussels Conference.

Secretary of State informs me that the United States' Government telegraphed yesterday to their Minister at Brussels that United States withholds support from the Dutch

proposals as they believe them to be impracticable. The Minister will ask that the same fiscal treatment throughout the whole Congo Basin may be accorded to the United States as is enjoyed by Berlin Signatories. United States' Government seems to favour the French proposal for independent territorial Tariff, but United States' Minister will probably suggest that to avert ruinous competition by Tariff, it should be made subject to a minimum as well as to a maximum limit. Maximum limit of 15 per cent. was spoken of, and a minimum of 10 per cent.

No. 306.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 12.)

(No. 71. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 12, 1890, 7 P.M.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 69 of the 11th instant:

I learn that the King will not relinquish the duty of 10 per cent. at which salt is assessed in the French Tariff proposals, nor will His Majesty consent to reduce the duty on tissues to 5 per cent., except on condition of a corresponding increase of the export duties on ivory and india-rubber.

The Belgian Minister at Paris has notified to the French Government to-day the general agreement of Belgium to the proposed common Tariff for the West Coast.

I learn from Baron Lambertmont that the Russian Government will reserve their answer to the Dutch counter-proposals until the other Powers have replied.

No. 307.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 13.)

(No. 66. Africa. Very Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 12, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt this day of your Lordship's despatch, Africa, of the 10th instant, and in reply have to report that, almost incredible as it seems, the Minister for Foreign Affairs has once more endeavoured to back out of the conciliatory assurances he has been periodically giving of late in the matter of the Congo duties.

The course he has followed on this occasion has been exactly similar to that which he took with me. After giving the German Minister positively to understand on Monday last that he and his colleagues were prepared to give way, he, the following day, addressed to Baron de Saurma a private letter, stating that he wished it to be understood that he had entered into no formal engagement in that respect. The German Minister, however, not being disposed to acquiesce in this mode of proceeding, called upon M. Hartsen again, and told him that it was no use his endeavouring to withdraw from the assurances he had given, as they had already been reported to Berlin, and he strongly represented the bad effect produced by his thus trying to unsay one day what he had said the day before.

M. Hartsen was evidently very ill at ease, and was at a loss to explain his conduct; but the impression which my German colleague derived from this interview was that he had in reality made up his mind to yield, but was in great fear lest it should become known that he had come to such a resolve.

Your Lordship will perhaps allow me to observe that on this occasion, as on that on which M. Hartsen made similar conciliatory overtures through me, as soon as any hint of his Excellency's disposition to give way reached Count Bvlandt, that diplomatist, whose patriotism is of a distinctly Chauvinistic character, seems at once to have sounded a note of alarm, which, I firmly believe, found an echo here among the ill-advised persons who have encouraged the Dutch Government in their resistance.

I will go so far as to record my conviction that the Cabinet are really conscious of their inability to carry their opposition any further; but that in view of the discussion of the Budgets of the different Ministerial Departments which is now going on in the Second Chamber, they are very anxious not to give any opening for attack to their adversaries, and they are also naturally desirous to avoid anything in the shape of a Ministerial crisis at the present conjuncture.

Nor can they well hold any decided language as long as they have not taken the

Pleasure of the Queen-Regent in this affair. In a very few days Her Majesty, who is engaged in studying the question, will probably make her personal views known, and there is very good reason to believe that they will be bound to be favourable to an acquiescence in the clearly-expressed will of the Powers.

The Cabinet, in fact, have to do with a foreign question of great delicacy, which is, unfortunately, not simplified by the management it receives at the hands of their *ex officio* spokesman.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 308.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 13.)

(No. 290. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 12, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 70 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to inclose copy of the note which, in obedience to your Lordship's instructions, and after consultation with Baron Lambertmont, I have addressed to Prince de Chimay, conveying to him, for communication to the Netherlands Government, your Lordship's answer to their counter-proposals, suggesting other means of providing the resources required by the Congo State to enable it to carry out the engagements imposed by the General Act of the Brussels Conference.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 308.

Lord Vivian to the Prince de Chimay.

Prince,

Brussels, December 11, 1890.

THE Marquis of Salisbury informs me that Her Majesty's Government have had under their consideration the two alternative proposals put forward by the Netherlands Government for indemnifying the Congo State for the increased expenditure it will have to incur in carrying out the obligations with respect to the suppression of the Slave Trade imposed by the provisions of the General Act of the Brussels Conference which were communicated to his Lordship in Baron Solvyns' note of the 4th November last.

I am now instructed to inform your Excellency, in reply, that the proposal to provide the necessary expenses for the above purpose from an annual contribution to be obtained from the Powers parties to the General Act is not one which Her Majesty's Government can entertain.

As regards the proposal to provide the required funds by an increase of the spirit duties, Her Majesty's Government would offer no objection thereto if all the other Powers could be persuaded to assent to it, the proposal being in accordance with the policy which Her Majesty's Government have always advocated in the interests of the native races of Africa, but they are convinced that the reopening of the decision of the Conference on this point would be impracticable.

I am to request that your Excellency will have the goodness to communicate this reply on the part of Her Majesty's Government to the Netherlands Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 309.

Mr. Gough to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 13, 2.45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Stockholm, December 13, 1890, 1.55 P.M.

WITH reference to my telegram of yesterday:

The Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs will be happy to meet your wishes with regard to an immediate reply through the Belgian Government, which he has accordingly sent this morning.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 13.)

(No. 72. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 13, 1890, 5 P.M.

BARON LAMBERMONT has just told me that Italy has definitively rejected the Dutch counter-proposals, and that the United States, Portugal, Austria, and France have promised to send in answers in the same sense without delay. Belgium and the Congo State will, he says, follow suit.

He suggests that the Porte might be informed of the rejection of the Dutch counter-proposals by France, and that it might be intimated to the Russian Government that it is the desire of Holland that the answers to her proposals should reach her through the Belgian Government.

I learn that at a meeting of the leaders of the Dutch Opposition held at the Hague it has been decided that, in the event of the Netherlands Cabinet being compelled to yield to the pressure of the Powers on the question of the Congo duties, the Opposition would not take advantage of it to embarrass the Government.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 13.)*

(No. 8.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 13, 1890.

IT is desirable that we should be furnished with your Lordship's instructions, with as little delay as possible, respecting the revised draft Import Tariff for the eastern zone of the conventional basin of the Congo, inclosed in our despatch No. 16 of the 11th instant.

The Import Tariff for the western zone is now practically settled, and will in all probability be communicated by an exchange of notes between the three Powers interested.

Does your Lordship authorize us to act in a similar manner with regard to the Tariff arrangements for the eastern zone, leaving open the question as to the procedure to be adopted with regard to the eventual communications of the respective agreements to the Technical Commission?

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 13.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

The Hague, December 13, 1890.

I SAW Baron Mackay to-day, and learned from him in the strictest confidence that his Government are really about to give way. They must, however, he said, in the first instance, justify their conduct before the Chambers, by obtaining an official intimation from the Powers that the proposals put forward by the Netherlands Government were not considered to be acceptable. This communication, which his Excellency trusted would be conveyed in friendly language, would then invite the Netherlands Government, no other solution being found practicable, to withdraw from their present position, and to sign the Act and Declaration of Brussels.

In view of the undertaking I have given to treat Baron Mackay's communication as quite confidential, I would suggest to your Lordship that it might be as well to keep this information from the knowledge of Count Bylandt.

Baron Mackay is, I feel sure, a most reliable man, and I cannot but think that the present difficulty will be dispelled as soon as the Netherlands Government have received a communication in the sense which I have above indicated.

No. 313.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 77.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 13, 1890.

BESIDES the answers you have already received, favourable replies have come in from Vienna and Washington. Turkey and Russia, however, are still hesitating, which renders it a matter of doubt whether there will be sufficient time to allow of unanimity being secured.

You should accordingly suggest to Baron Lambermont that the Belgian Government might inform that of the Netherlands of the answers which have been received unfavourable to their alternative proposals, and point out that, without waiting for the remainder, they are sufficient to show it is impossible they can be accepted. It might then be urged upon them that, in view of the necessities of the situation, they should sign the Act without further delay.

If Baron Lambermont concurs, Her Majesty's Government would instruct Sir H. Rumbold to support his Belgian colleague at the Hague.

No. 314.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 78.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 13, 1890.

THE draft Agreement respecting a Tariff for the eastern basin which was included in the British Delegate's despatch No. 16 of the 11th instant is approved by Her Majesty's Government, who also give the authority asked for in their telegram No. 8 of to-day's date.

No. 315.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 13, 1890.

WE hear that the Russian Government are still hesitating to send their refusal of the Dutch counter-proposals to Brussels. It would be well for you to press your Russian colleague on the subject, pointing out that all the other Powers have agreed with the exception of Turkey.

No. 316.

The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.

(No. 18.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 13, 1890.

THE Porte is hesitating as to the rejection of the counter-proposals made by the Dutch, and as we are confidentially informed by Sir W. White that the French Embassy at Constantinople is adverse, your Excellency should ask that they may receive instructions to support the action his Excellency has taken in the matter.

No. 317.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

(No. 117.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 13, 1890.

THE Porte is hesitating as to the answer it should return to the Dutch counter-proposals. I have to request you to ask the German Government to direct their Ambassador at Constantinople, who is said to have no instructions, to support Sir W. White.

No. 318.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(No. 31. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 13, 1890.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 65, Africa, of the 10th instant, and I have to inform you that the language held by you to the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the Congo duties, as reported therein, is approved.

With regard to what M. Hartsen said as to the answers to the Dutch counter-proposals from the various Governments to whom they had been submitted, I have to inform you that the reply of Her Majesty's Government has already been communicated to that of Belgium; that they have urged the other Powers Signatories of the Berlin Act to adopt a like course, and that favourable replies have already been received from Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, and the United States.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 319.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 13.)

(No. 73. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 13, 1890, 11 P.M.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 77 of to-day's date, Baron Lambermont informs me that Turkey, Germany, and Denmark have communicated to the Belgian Government their rejection of the Dutch counter-proposals.

So soon as the further promised answers, announced in my telegram No. 72 of to-day, are received, Baron Lambermont will communicate all the replies to the Hague.

He will take further steps to-morrow, which he thinks will prove successful, to induce Russia to send her reply.

No. 320.

Foreign Office to Society of Friends.

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 13, 1890.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, inclosing a Memorial respecting the objections of Holland to the signature of the Brussels Act.

I am, &c.

(Signed) P. CURRIE.

No. 321.

Sir E. Malet to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 14.)

(No. 92. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Berlin, December 14, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 117, Africa, of yesterday's date, Baron Marschall sent instructions to Herr von Radowitz at Constantinople on the 12th instant, telling his Excellency to urge the Porte to immediately announce at Brussels its rejection of the Dutch proposals.

No. 322.

Sir W. White to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 14.)

(Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, December 14, 1890.

WITH reference to my telegram of the 12th and to your Lordship's telegram of the 10th instant on the subject of the Brussels Conference, I have the honour to

report that the representations which have been repeatedly made by the Belgian Minister, which I have supported of late, and in which M. de Radowitz co-operated yesterday, were last night crowned with success.

A telegram has been sent to Brussels by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, stating that the three proposals made by the Government of the Netherlands are declined by the Imperial Ottoman Government.

No. 323.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 15.)

(No. 17.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 13, 1890.

MR. TERRELL, the United States' Minister, showed Sir J. Kirk to-day a Resolution which he has been instructed by the Secretary of State to move in the Technical Commission, and to insist on as an indispensable condition to the acceptance by the United States' Government of the Import Tariff arrangements proposed for the conventional basin of the Congo. In communicating the text of this document, Mr. Terrell added that it was the earnest wish of the American Government to secure the success of the work of the Brussels Conference, in which they took a deep interest.

It will be seen from this American Declaration, copy of which we have the honour to inclose, that the United States' Government ask to be confirmed in their right to the most-favoured-nation treatment within the whole of the conventional basin of the Congo not under reserve, or the operation of special Treaties.

Without in any way engaging your Lordship, we have expressed a personal opinion that, since the treatment asked for by the United States is generally accorded by Her Majesty's Government, and would, moreover, seem in this case to be implied by the terms made use of in the Berlin Act (in which foreigners of all nationalities and not subjects or citizens of the Signatory Powers are always spoken of), the American Declaration will probably give rise to no objection on our part.

In consideration of the confirmation of this right to the most-favoured-nation treatment, the United States are ready to waive their claims to freedom from import duties secured to them by the Declaration of Washington of the 22nd April, 1884, between the United States and the International Association of the Congo, subsequently taken over by the Congo State, and to allow any modifications of the Import Tariff agreed to by the Powers interested to take effect.

If your Lordship takes this view, we would venture to suggest that, seeing that the United States' Government will not be finally bound until the changes contemplated by this Declaration have been assented to by the Senate, it might be well for us to make it clearly understood in Commission that no Tariff system involving a modification of the Berlin Act shall come into effect until the formal arrangement to be entered into between the United States of America and the Congo Free State, modifying their existing Commercial Convention, shall have been duly confirmed by the American Senate.

We would further ask to be informed, by telegraph, whether your Lordship approves of this suggestion, as a meeting of the Technical Commission will probably take place at an early date, and the outstanding work pressed forward as rapidly as possible.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN KIRK.

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure in No. 323.

Draft Resolution.

ATTENDU que les États-Unis d'Amérique ont consenti—en tant que leur consentement soit nécessaire à cette fin—au principe des droits d'entrée dans le bassin conventionnel du Congo ;

Attendu que ce consentement a été donné sous la condition expresse que leurs intérêts commerciaux ne soient pas méconnus dans les pays de ce bassin avec lesquels ils n'ont pas de Traités spéciaux ;

Considérant qu'il importe d'atteindre ce but ;

Il est déclaré et garanti formellement par toutes les Puissances intéressées que, dans tout le bassin conventionnel du Congo où des droits de tarification n'ont pas été réservés et dans les parties de ce bassin où les États-Unis n'ont pas maintenant de Traités spéciaux, les États-Unis d'Amérique doivent jouir, pour leur pavillon, leurs nationaux, et leurs intérêts commerciaux, du même traitement que celui accordé aux Puissances Signataires de l'Acte Général de Berlin, spécialement en ce qui regarde les droits d'entrée et les privilèges commerciaux et en ce qui concerne la prohibition de tous droits différentiels et de tous droits de transit.

No. 324.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 15.)

(No. 293. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 14, 1890.

THE replies from all the Powers except Russia to the counter-proposals submitted by the Netherlands Government for indemnifying the Congo State for its expenditure in suppressing the Slave Trade have either been received or are on their way here, the Spanish Government having answered since I last telegraphed: they all reject the proposals, and Baron Lambertmont will be able to communicate them to the Cabinet of the Hague within a day or two.

They will afford the best justification for the evident intention of the Dutch Government to give way before the unanimous opinion of the Powers, and for their further justification they can point to the material advantages, in the shape of a moderate Tariff and reduced export duties, which they have undoubtedly secured by their obstinate resistance, while their Parliamentary difficulties will be smoothed by the decision of the leaders of the Opposition not to take advantage of this difficulty to embarrass the Government.

As regards the Russian answer, Baron Lambertmont has telegraphed to St. Petersburg that the replies of all the other Powers have either been received or are on their way, and that, as it is at the express request of the Netherlands Government that he has pressed for these answers, the Russian Government are not doing them a service by withholding theirs.

The Belgian Minister at Paris has also been instructed to ask M. Ribot to telegraph to St. Petersburg in the same sense, and Baron Lambertmont expects to receive the Russian answer the day after to-morrow.

I therefore hope that we are within a measurable distance of a satisfactory solution of this last and most serious obstacle to the completion of the Acts of the Brussels Conference.

A final meeting of the Commission for the announcement of the arrangements that have been effected by direct negotiations will probably be convoked towards the end of the coming week.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 325.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 15.)

(No. 294. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 14, 1890.

VERY satisfactory progress has been made during the past week outside the Tariff Commission towards the solution of the difficulties which had arrested its labours.

A moderate uniform maximum Tariff of 5 per cent. applicable to all imports except arms and spirits, on which higher duties are contemplated, has been framed by the British, German, and Italian Delegates for the eastern zone of the Congo, which Her Majesty's Government have approved, and which only awaits the sanction of the other two Governments.

The group of Powers on the West Coast has also framed a common Tariff of 6 per cent., leviable on all imported goods without distinction of origin, except arms, salt, and spirits, which will be liable to higher duties which can only be modified by

common consent, a guarantee being thus given against differential treatment, as well as against the excessive or capricious raising or lowering of the Tariff.

It is proposed that these respective agreements shall be recorded in detail either by an exchange of notes or by joint Declarations signed by the interested Powers, and the only point that remains to be settled is as to the procedure by which the respective agreements should be notified or communicated to the Technical Commission.

The French and German Governments have proposed that the arrangement of this delicate question shall be left to the President of the Commission, who is fully aware of the views held by the respective Governments on this point, and I venture to suggest that it could not be intrusted to more competent hands. The German Government have stated that they are quite prepared to adhere to the decision of the majority of the Powers on this point.

The Tariff of export duties which the French Government have proposed and the Congo Government have accepted, amounting to a duty of 10 per cent. on ivory and india-rubber, will satisfy the complaints to which the recent exorbitant duties on these products have given rise, and I am informed that the Royal Decrees enacting this Tariff, and certain other reductions of taxation which the King will spontaneously make, will declare that it shall remain in force for ten years.

The British Delegates have communicated to your Lordship the Declaration to be made in commission by their United States' colleague, by which his Government demand most-favoured-nation treatment in every respect throughout the whole conventional basin of the Congo, in exchange for the surrender of their rights to free entry in the Congo State under the Declaration of Washington, as well as the Supplementary Declaration on our part by which Sir John Kirk proposes to guard against the risk of the refusal of the United States' Senate to ratify the arrangements made at Brussels.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 326.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 15.)

(No. 295. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 14, 1890,

I LOST no time in communicating confidentially to Baron Lambertmont your Lordship's telegram No. 79 of to-day, reporting that Baron Mackay had informed Sir Horace Rumbold in strict confidence that the Dutch Government were really prepared to give way in the matter of the Congo import duties on receiving an official communication, couched in friendly terms, showing that the Powers considered the Dutch counter-proposals unacceptable, and inviting that Government, in default of any other solution, to reconsider their decision, and to sign both Acts of the Brussels Conference. I added that your Lordship presumed that it was intended that this communication should come from the Belgian Government.

In reply, Baron Lambertmont, after consulting the King, has requested me to ask your Lordship whether Her Majesty's Government will authorize him, in transmitting the answers of the Powers to the Cabinet of the Hague, to express in their name and in a friendly manner the earnest hope that, as no other solution is possible, the Netherlands Government will yield to the unanimous desire of the Powers, and give its adhesion to the Acts of the Brussels Conference.

Baron Lambertmont begged me to ask for your Lordship's immediate answer by telegraph, and said that he was telegraphing in the same sense to the other Powers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 327.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 15.)

(No. 67. Africa. Secret.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 13, 1890.

I HAD occasion to call upon Baron Mackay this morning, and took the opportunity of saying a few words to him on the Congo question.

I said that I would venture to tell him in confidence that the vacillation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who one day gave it to be understood that he was prepared to yield in the matter of the Congo duties, and the next day hastened to withdraw these assurances, was producing a very unfavourable effect, and that I knew that your Lordship had yourself, in conversation with Count Bylandt, found it necessary to call attention to the obscurity of M. Hartsen's language.

Baron Mackay being evidently struck by what I told him on this point, I went on to say that if he could himself give me any distinct assurance as to the conciliatory intentions of his Government, I would engage to treat them as most strictly confidential.

His Excellency then admitted to me that the Cabinet were really prepared to yield, provided they could obtain an official communication from the Powers, couched, as he had no doubt it would be, in friendly and courteous terms, to the effect that the Dutch counter-proposals had been carefully considered, but were not found to be acceptable, and that no other solution of the difficulty presenting itself, it was hoped that the Dutch Government would be willing to reconsider their decision, and would agree to sign the Act of Brussels, together with the Declaration annexed to it.

I promised the Prime Minister that I would observe the greatest discretion with respect to what he had stated to me. I am convinced that your Lordship may rely on the sincerity of Baron Mackay's assurances, and fully believe that as soon as the Dutch Government receive a reply from the Powers in the sense indicated above, the difficulty will be at an end. At the same time, Baron Mackay expressly stated that without some formal communication from the Powers in reply to the Dutch proposals, the Cabinet would be unable to justify their conduct before the States-General.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 328.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 15.)

(No. 18. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, December 15, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 18, Africa, I have the honour to report that M. Ribot has telegraphed to the French Ambassador at Constantinople to urge the Porte to reply to the Dutch counter-proposals in terms similar to those employed by the other Powers. Belgian Minister at Paris has informed him that all the Powers have sent satisfactory replies to the Belgian Government on this subject.

No. 329.

Board of Trade to Foreign Office.—(Received December 15.)

Sir,

Board of Trade, London, December 15, 1890.

I AM directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the despatch No. 16 from the British Delegates to the Commission now sitting at Brussels on the subject of the proposals respecting import duties to be levied in the territories comprised in the conventional basin of the Congo, with which was submitted a revised draft of the Tariff proposed to be applied in the eastern part of the region referred to.

The Board observe that the new proposal is for fixing the rate of 5 per cent. *ad valorem* as the maximum to be levied by each State concerned, *i.e.*, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy, subject to the provisions of Article IV of the Berlin Act of 1885, the application of the said maximum rate being optional and not compulsory. Arms and ammunition under certain conditions, as well as spirits, may be taxed more heavily, and machinery of various descriptions will be admitted free. This is practically the treatment provided by our own and other Treaties with Zanzibar, and the Board can see no objection to the proposals put forward. I am, accordingly, to request that you will be good enough to inform Lord Salisbury that this Department is disposed to recommend the acceptance of the new draft by Her Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY G. CALCRAFT.

No. 330.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 81.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 15, 1890.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 295 of the 14th instant, Her Majesty's Government concur as to the intimation which Baron Lambermont proposes to make in their name.

No. 331.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold,

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 15, 1890.

THE rejection of the Dutch counter-proposals has now been signified by all the Signatory Powers except Russia.

No. 332.

The Marquis of Dufferin to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 16.)

(No. 14. Africa.)

My Lord,

Rome, December 12, 1890.

ON receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 10th instant respecting the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels, I at once informed the Italian Government that your Lordship was desirous that they should send an immediate reply to the counter-proposals put forward by the Dutch Government, and pointed out that these proposals had no chance of success.

I have now the honour to inclose translation of a note which I have just received from Signor Crispi replying to my communication. His Excellency states that the Italian Government has declined the invitation of the Netherlands to take part in a Conference for the discussion of the Dutch counter-proposals. The Italian Government added that they had come to this determination because a Conference was already sitting at Brussels with a view to a solution of the problem by other means, and in making this declaration they intended definitely to reject the Dutch counter-proposals.

I have, &c.

(Signed) DUFFERIN AND AVA.

Inclosure in No. 332.

Signor Crispi to the Marquis of Dufferin.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur,

Rome, December 12, 1890.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the King's Government has declined the invitation extended to them by the Netherlands Government to take part in a Conference for the discussion of the Dutch counter-proposals for furnishing the Congo State with the means necessary to enable it to fulfil its obligations under the general Anti-Slavery Act of Brussels.

The Royal Government has given as the reason for this determination the fact, that an International Conference is actually sitting at Brussels charged with the duty of seeking by other means a solution of the problem, and they intended by this declaration definitively to reject those counter-proposals which would have formed the subject of debate at the Conference proposed by the Dutch Government.

I avail, &c.

(Signed) F. CRISPI.

No. 333.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 16.)

(No. 74. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 16, 1890, 6:30 P.M.

BARON LAMBERMONT having been made aware of your Lordship's view, that the Tariff for the western coast of the conventional basin of the Congo, when settled between the group of interested Powers, should be communicated to the Tariff Commission for such action as they may think fit to make thereon, has requested me to warn your Lordship that this cause will certainly be objected to by the French Government, as they hold that the Commission has no right of control over Tariff arrangements settled by direct negotiation between the Powers in question.

The German Government attaches no importance to the communication of the Tariff to the Commission.

In these circumstances, I would ask whether the British Delegates should insist on your Lordship's view, which may give rise to serious difficulties.

The Delegates would also be glad to be informed whether they may accept the American Declaration (to which the German Government have assented), stating the conditions on which the United States are willing to waive their right to protection from import duties, which was inclosed in the British Delegates' despatch No. 17 of the 13th instant, and whether your Lordship approves of Sir J. Kirk's suggestion as to a Supplementary Declaration on our part which was contained in the same despatch.

No. 334.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 16.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

The Hague, December 16, 1890.

I DULY received your Lordship's telegram of Saturday last, and have since seen my Russian colleague. He has now requested his Government by telegraph to send their reply without delay to the Belgian Government, in view of the fact that he had been informed by M. Hartsen that the Dutch Government were very desirous of obtaining all the answers from the Powers with the least possible delay.

No. 335.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 82.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 16, 1890.

HER Majesty's Government agree in the suggestion, that the President should communicate the Tariff arrangements to the Commission.

No. 336.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 17.)

(No. 68. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 16, 1890.

I WAS unable to see my Russian colleague before yesterday, when I explained to him, in obedience to your Lordship's telegraphic instructions, that I was informed that his Government hesitated to send their reply to the Dutch counter-proposals, and that I supposed that they did so in the desire not to do anything that should be disagreeable to the Government of the Netherlands. I went on to say that I believed he would find that the Imperial Government were under a misapprehension as to the real wishes of the Dutch Government, who were, on the contrary, anxious to receive all the replies to their proposals as soon as possible, and I added that, with the excep-

tion of the Russian Government, all the Governments had, I knew, already remitted their answers to Brussels. I hoped, therefore, that he would see his way to make clear the real state of the case at St. Petersburg, and would request that a speedy reply might be given to the Dutch proposals.

Count Kapnist promised me that he would speak to M. Hartsen without loss of time on this point. I met him this morning, when he told me the Minister for Foreign Affairs had confirmed to him what I had said about the importance which the Government attached to receiving the answers of all the Powers with the least possible delay, and he said that he would at once telegraph to St. Petersburg in the sense desired.

I may observe that the Dutch Minister at St. Petersburg had long ago been verbally informed by M. de Giers of the view taken of the proposals of his Government, which was decidedly unfavourable to them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 337.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 17.)

(No. 69. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 16, 1890.

DURING the debate which took place last night in the Second Chamber on the Foreign Office Estimates, the question of the attitude taken by the Government in the affair of the Congo duties was brought forward, when it clearly appeared that the sense of the House was in favour of leaving a perfectly free hand to the Government in the solution of the difficulty.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 338.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 17.)*

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 17, 1890.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram to Lord Vivian No. 78, Africa, of the 13th instant, we have the honour to report that our German colleagues have been authorized by the Imperial Government to accept the draft Tariff for the eastern zone of the conventional Congo Basin, inclosed in our despatch No. 16 of the 11th instant.

No. 339.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 17.)

(No. 19. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, December 17, 1890, 4.15 p.m.

I AM informed by M. Ribot that the agreement he had come to with Belgium for a general reduction of the Congo export duties to 10 per cent. is now upset by an unexpected declaration which he has received through the Belgian Minister here that this proposal was only intended to apply to the so-called zone open to commerce, and that for all the rest of the Congo State the King insists on maintaining commercial monopoly and prohibitive duties.

M. Ribot says that the value of previous assurances, which he had accepted as final, is entirely destroyed by this declaration. He has consulted the French Colonial Department upon it; but the whole question is now reopened.

The common Tariff for the western basin is completely settled by Portugal's acceptance of it, and M. Ribot has instructed the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, by telegraph, to urge the Russian Government to notify their rejection of the Dutch counter-proposals without delay.

The only thing that now stops the way is the reopening of the question about the Congo export duties.

No. 340.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 84.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 17, 1890.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 83 of yesterday's date:

On further consideration, I am of opinion that it would be better the American declaration, pure and simple, should be accepted. You are accordingly authorized to adopt this course.

No. 341.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 85.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 17, 1890.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 74 of yesterday's date:

If the other Powers are not disposed to insist as regards the West Coast Tariff, Her Majesty's Government will not do so.

No. 342.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 86.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 17, 1890.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 85 of this day's date repeating Lord Lytton's telegram No. 19:

The Belgian Government would commit a serious error if they were at the last moment to raise unexpected difficulties, and in so doing impede the settlement.

No. 343.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 17.)

(No. 75. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 17, 1890, 7:30 P.M.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 85 of to-day's date, informing me that Her Majesty's Government would not insist on the communication of the Tariff for the western coast of the Congo Basin to the Tariff Commission if the other Powers did not do so, Baron Lambertmont tells me that the representations he has made at Paris have induced the French Government to consent to the communication of the Tariff to the Commission "par convenance."

He warmly acknowledges the conciliatory spirit shown by your Lordship in this matter.

The note which the Belgian Government will address to the Dutch Government, conveying the answers of the Powers to the Dutch counter-proposals, is now only waiting for the reply of the Russian Government.

No. 344.

The Marquis of Salisbury to the British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference.

(No. 4.)

Gentlemen,

Foreign Office, December 17, 1890.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 15 of the 6th instant, reporting a conversation between Sir J. Kirk and Baron Lambermont on the subject of the proposals made by the French Government respecting the Congo duties, and I have to inform you that the language held by Sir John Kirk on the occasion in question is approved.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 345.

The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 18.)

(No. 18.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 17, 1890.

WITH reference to our despatch No. 14 of the 5th instant, we have the honour to inclose three copies of an amendment in the *procès-verbal* of the sitting of the Technical Commission of the 22nd ultimo, correcting a typographical error in the printed copy of the declaration made by M. Bourée, and substituting the word "réserves" for "ressources." (See p. 46, last line but one.)

We have, &c.

(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 346.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 18.)

(No. 76. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 18, 1890.

I HAVE received from Baron Lambermont the following explanation of the difficulty which has arisen in Paris with regard to the Congo export duties, referred to in your Lordship's telegrams Nos. 85 and 86 of last evening.

A Royal Decree, dated the 9th July last, and published in the "Official Bulletin" of the Congo State, No. 7 (forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 54, Africa, of the 13th August last), divided the State territories into two fiscal zones, one open to commerce, in which the patent duty was fixed at 2 fr., in addition to the export duty, the other, where the State is not yet in a position to protect commerce, in which, besides the export duty, the patent tax is fixed at 4 fr.

The King consented to convert into a 10 per cent. duty the duties leviable in the former zone only, but it is asserted that this concession was never meant to extend to the latter zone, when, until the State is in a position to protect trade, His Majesty desires to discourage by duties, which are practically prohibitive, the entry of adventurers.

I am told that the precise duties to be so converted were specified in the Belgian note to the French Government, and that, if they understood that the 10 per cent. duty extended to the ivory trade of the reserved zone, it was a misunderstanding on their part; the distinction between the duties leviable in the two zones satisfies the Belgian trading Companies and their French shareholders, who have undertaken to explain the question to the French Government.

Baron Lambermont promised to bring M. Ribot's statement to the King's notice, but he held out no hope of His Majesty yielding on a point which he considers

essential for the protection of trade. It is denied that any State trading monopoly is carried on in the reserved zone.

Baron Lambert hopes to receive M. Ribot's answer to-day after the representatives of the Belgian trading Companies have explained the question to the French Government.

No. 347.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 18.)

(No. 77. Africa. Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 18, 1890, 11 P.M.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding telegram on the subject of the Congo export duties, I am inclined to think, notwithstanding the plausible explanation which has been given to me of the reasons which have led the Government of the Congo State to refuse to include the so-called reserved zone in the territory to which the 10 per cent. export duty on ivory will be applied, that its decision in this respect may also be prompted by considerations of a pecuniary nature.

I have represented strongly the serious error it would be to allow any such considerations to impede a final settlement.

No. 348.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 18.)

(No. 78. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 18, 1890, 10 P.M.

THE King sent for me this evening, and begged me to telegraph to your Lordship the following statement in reply to the version given by M. Ribot to Lord Lytton of the difficulty which had arisen in Paris.

His Majesty protested strongly against the imputation, that his Government had departed in any way from the proposals they had originally made in compliance with the wishes of the French Government, and which M. Ribot had verbally sanctioned.

His Majesty explained that the Belgian Minister at Paris had only demanded that the record of the agreement between the two Governments should textually reproduce the terms employed in his note conveying the Belgian reply to the French proposals. That note only conceded the conversion into a 10 per cent. duty of the patent and export duties specified in Article 1 of the Decree of the 9th July.

The King said that the Belgian Government, the Belgian trading Companies, and their French shareholders were doing all in their power to induce the French Government to give way; more could not be done, and he must positively refuse to make a concession which, in his opinion, would inevitably embroil the Congo State in political difficulties which might be fatal to it.

No. 349.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 18.)

(No. 79. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 18, 1890, 10 P.M.

THE Russian answer to the Dutch counter-proposals for the provision of resources for the Congo State has just been received by the Belgian Government. It is to the same effect as the replies of the other Powers.

A note was to-day addressed to the Netherlands Minister at Brussels by the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, inclosing all the answers of the Governments,

and adding, in the name of the Powers, a most friendly expression of their hope that as they could not accept the Netherlands counter-proposals, and as no other solution had been suggested, Holland would yield to their unanimous wish, and sign both the Acts of the 2nd July.

No. 350.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 312. Africa.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, December 18, 1890.

I APPROVE the terms of the note which you have addressed to the Prince de Chimay on the subject of the Dutch counter-proposals, copy of which was inclosed in your despatch No. 290 of the 12th instant.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 351.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 19.)

(No. 296. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 18, 1890.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 79 of to-day, I have the honour to inclose copy of the note which the Belgian Government have addressed to-day to the Netherlands Minister at this Court, forwarding to him the answers received from the Powers represented at the Brussels Conference to the Netherlands proposals for providing the resources required by the Congo State for the suppression of the Slave Trade, and expressing in the most friendly manner the hope of the Powers that, as no other solution has been suggested, the Netherlands Government will yield to the unanimous wish of the Powers, and sign the Acts of the Conference.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

Inclosure in No. 351.

Prince de Chimay to Baron Gericke.

M. le Baron,

Bruzelles, le 18 Décembre, 1890.

LE Gouvernement du Roi n'a pas manqué de faire parvenir aux Puissances intéressées les propositions que le Cabinet de La Haye avait bien voulu nous confier le soin de leur transmettre.

Les Puissances nous ont fait part de leurs vues sur ces propositions qu'à leur sincère regret elles n'ont pas cru pouvoir accueillir et n'ont suggéré aucune autre combinaison conçue dans le même ordre d'idées.

J'ai l'honneur, M. le Baron, de communiquer à votre Excellence les réponses que le Gouvernement du Roi a reçues.

Le vœu des Puissances est de voir le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la Reine Régente des Pays-Bas se rendre à leur désir unanime et signer les Actes du 2 Juillet dernier. Ce vœu, je suis autorisé à l'exprimer en leur nom et dans l'esprit le plus amical, et je demande la permission d'y associer tout particulièrement le Gouvernement du Roi.

Je saisis, &c.
(Signé) LE PRINCE DE CHIMAY.

No. 352.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 19.)*

(No. 10.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 19, 1890.

WITH reference to our telegram to your Lordship No. 9 of the 17th instant, we have the honour to report that our Italian colleagues have been authorized by their Government to accept the draft Tariff for the eastern zone of the conventional Congo Basin, inclosed in our despatch No. 16 of the 11th instant.

No. 353.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 20.)*

(No. 19.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 19, 1890.

AT a meeting to-day of the Delegates of the three Powers interested in the eastern zone of the conventional basin of the Congo, the inclosed draft, embodying the Tariff arrangement sanctioned by your Lordship's telegram to Lord Vivian No. 78, Africa, of the 13th instant, was agreed upon.

We should be obliged by your Lordship informing us by telegraph whether we are authorized to sign the same.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure in No. 353.

Draft Agreement embodying proposed Tariff for the Eastern Zone.

LES Soussignés, Sir John Kirk et Mr. M. Gosselin, Délégués de la Grande-Bretagne; M. le Comte d'Alvensleben et M. Göhring, Délégués d'Allemagne; et M. le Baron de Renzis et M. A. Bardi, Délégués de l'Italie;

Dûment autorisés à cet effet par leurs Gouvernements respectifs, conformément aux dispositions de la Déclaration signée à Bruxelles le 2 Juillet, 1890, ainsi qu'à l'Acte Général de la Conférence de la même date, sont convenus de modifier de la manière suivante, dans les limites de la zone orientale du bassin conventionnel du Congo, l'Article IV de l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Berlin de 1885, tout en restant dans les conditions prévues par la dite Déclaration.

1. La Grande-Bretagne, l'Allemagne, et l'Italie dans les territoires sous leur influence situés dans la zone orientale du bassin conventionnel du Congo, et soumis à l'Article IV de l'Acte Général de Berlin, auront le droit de prélever des droits sur les marchandises importées dans ces territoires, soit par terre soit par eau, conformément au régime douanier actuellement en vigueur, d'après les Traités avec le Zanzibar, qui prévoient un droit d'entrée de 5 pour cent *ad valorem*.

2. Les armes et munitions introduites selon les dispositions spéciales de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles pourront cependant être grevées d'un droit d'entrée qui ne dépassera pas le taux de 10 pour cent *ad valorem*, si les stipulations des Traités qui s'y opposent actuellement sont modifiées, et si les circonstances le permettent.

3. Le droit d'entrée à prélever sur les alcools sera réglé selon les stipulations du Chapitre VI de l'Acte Général de Bruxelles.

4. Les marchandises suivantes seront admises en franchise de droits, à savoir:—

Les machines et les instruments destinés à l'agriculture, ainsi que tous les matériaux destinés à la construction et à l'entretien des routes, tramways, et chemins de fer, et en général tous les moyens de transport.

5. Le présent accord entrera en vigueur en même temps que les Actes signés à Bruxelles le 2 Juillet, 1890. Il restera en vigueur pendant une période de cinq ans et demeurera valable pour cinq autres années et ainsi de suite de cinq ans en cinq ans

à moins que l'une ou l'autre des trois Puissances en demandent la revision, six mois avant l'expiration de la période quinquennale.

En foi de quoi, les soussignés Délégués ont dressé le présent Acte.
Fait à Bruxelles, le

No. 354.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 20.)

(No. 297. Slave Trade Conference.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 19, 1890.

THE King sent for me last evening to speak to me about M. Ribot's version of the difficulty which has arisen at Paris as to the export duties to be levied on ivory in the Congo State, of which he had heard from Baron Lambertmont. His Majesty protested in the strongest terms against the imputation that the Belgian Government had in any way departed from their original proposals, and begged me to telegraph to your Lordship the true version of what had occurred, which I did last night.

The King sought to impress on me his view of the absolute necessity of limiting the concessions he had agreed to make with respect to the export duties on ivory to the zone within which trade could penetrate with safety. He dwelt on the necessity of discouraging adventurers from attempting to penetrate into remote districts where the State was not yet in a position to protect trading operations. Such expeditions, he said, could only be conducted by force, and must inevitably result in collisions with the natives, in bloodshed, and serious political difficulties.

I said that I failed to understand how the additional tax which His Majesty proposed to levy on the trade in ivory in the reserved zone, or anything short of the prohibition of trade, could prevent the dangers he foresaw.

His Majesty replied that on this point M. Ribot was right. The high patent tax added to the export duty, and the heavy cost of providing the large armed caravans which would be required for trading operations in these regions, combined with the competition of the State, would, in fact, amount to prohibition; but if, notwithstanding, adventurers should attempt to invade the reserved zone, he might find it necessary to declare a state of siege there, though he would much prefer to avoid such an extreme measure, which, perhaps, might not be strictly justified by the Act of Berlin.

I suggested that the heavy duty would encourage smuggling, and divert the ivory trade with the reserved zone to the German possessions and the East Coast. His Majesty did not share this view. He went on to say, very seriously, that rather than make a concession which he foresaw was fraught with political dangers which might be fatal to the Congo State he would prefer to give up the sovereignty, which he was prepared to do, but that so long as he remained Chief of the State, and was responsible for its welfare, he would never consent to so disastrous a sacrifice.

I earnestly reminded the King that this most unfortunate difficulty would certainly delay, and possibly even arrest, the completion of the work of the Brussels Conference, and that a grave responsibility would rest on whoever lightly incurred such a risk. His Majesty replied that he could scarcely believe that the French Government would continue to insist on their demand, and that every effort was being made at Paris to prevail on them not to do so; but that if they persisted in it, the responsibility for the consequences would rest with them, not with him.

The King's manner and language were firm and decided, and I do not think he will give way. The impression which the conversation left on me was, that His Majesty seriously apprehends that the concession which he is asked to make would involve grave political danger to the Congo State, but that his resolution is also inspired by a desire to keep the ivory trade of the reserved zone in his own hands.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 355.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 20.)

(No. 70. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 19, 1890.

THE "Handelsblad," a paper whose articles on the Congo question are believed to have been inspired by the Dutch Foreign Office here, contains the following statement as to the actual state of the negotiations:—

"When our Government," it says, "shall have received the answers expected from Brussels, they will, no doubt, require a few days more before coming to a final decision."

"It is possible that, in view of other serious interests of the country, that decision may be in conformity with the wishes of the Powers represented at the Conference; but the Netherlands will at least have the satisfaction of having opposed as long as they could a pernicious violation of the Treaty of Berlin, and of having succeeded in diminishing the harm done by the import duties by getting them reduced to a notable extent."

I have, &c.

(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 356.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 20.)

(No. 80. Africa.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 20, 1890, 7 P.M.

UNDER pressure and as a last concession the King has authorized an offer being made at Paris to substitute for the patent tax and export duty, now leviable in the "reserved zone," amounting together to 6 fr. a kilog., an *ad valorem* export duty of 25 per cent., the export duty in the open zone being only 10 per cent.

If, as I fear is probable, this offer is refused by the French Government, there seems but little prospect of a favourable issue of the present negotiations, as the King declares that he can make no further concession.

(Secret.)

I fear that His Majesty is actuated in this matter as much by pecuniary as by political motives.

No. 357.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir J. Kirk.

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 20, 1890.

YOU are authorized to sign the draft Tariff for the eastern zone which was inclosed in your despatch No. 19 of yesterday's date.

No. 358.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 22.)*

(No. 20.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 21, 1890.

AT the last meeting of the Congo Tariff Commission held on the 22nd ultimo (which formed the subject of our despatch No. 10 of that date), it was agreed to refer to the respective Governments the fundamental question raised by the French Minister's statement, viz., whether the import Tariff to be applied in the free zone should be settled in Commission or by private agreement between the Powers interested. Since then no formal meeting of the Commission has been held, and no opportunity given to us of stating in an official form the decision of Her Majesty's Government on this point.

Private negotiations have, however, been carried on between the members of the

eastern and western groups of States, based on our known acceptance of the French position, and Tariffs have been agreed upon for both the eastern and western zones.

The only difficulty now standing in the way of the final settlement is the difference which still exists between France and the Congo State on a question which, though outside the competency of the Commission, deeply affects the trading interests of all nations.

The work of the Commission, apart from the consideration of this extraneous but important question, being now complete, the British and German Delegates decided yesterday to urge Baron Lambertmont to summon a meeting of the Commission for to-morrow, the 22nd instant, in order that we might formally withdraw our objection to the French mode of procedure, and if possible arrange for the final closing of the Commission.

At an interview with the President, Count d'Alvensleben and Sir John Kirk informed him that the Eastern Tariff had now been agreed upon by the Delegates and accepted by the three Governments interested, and that it was proposed to give him a copy of this Agreement for communication at such time and in such manner as might be decided upon when the Western Powers shall have similarly made him acquainted with the result of their negotiations.

Baron Lambertmont told us that the Government of the Congo State was in communication with that of France with regard to the question of the export dues, in order to find a formula acceptable to the latter; but that in no case would the King abandon his right to levy a higher duty on ivory coming from the interior or reserved districts. The only concession proposed, so far as we understood, consisted in a conversion of the present 4 fr. per kilog. patent tax, plus 2 fr. per kilog. export duty on ivory, into an equivalent duty levied *ad valorem* amounting to 25 per cent., the average value of ivory being taken at 25 fr. per kilog.

The question still in dispute between France and the Congo State—in which other Powers are equally interested—is apparently as follows:—

The Congo State having, by the Decree of the 9th July last, closed to general trade all the districts outside and beyond the line of the navigable water-way of the Congo and its tributaries from Stanley Pool to Stanley Falls, with a narrow belt 50 kilom. wide on either side of the river banks, reserves special rights in the whole course of the upper river above Stanley Falls, and inland beyond the 50 kilom. belt indicated. Ivory, the only natural product that at present pays for collection in the reserved districts, has been subjected on exportation therefrom to a duty equal to from 25 to 30 per cent. on the average value. When negotiations were opened by the Congo Government with France, and the latter agreed to accept the reduction of the duty on ivory made in the Decrees to 10 per cent., it was understood at Paris that the special tax on ivory coming from the reserved districts would be abolished; this, it seems, the Congo Government never intended, and on this point a settlement has not yet been arrived at.

The practical result of the imposition of this special tax on ivory, really intended as a means of excluding private traders from the ivory markets, must depend upon the power of the Congo State to enforce its Decrees along its eastern frontiers, where it comes in contact with territories subject to British influence on the north and south, and to German influence in the intermediate part. Unless the Congo State can stop caravans laden with ivory from following the present beaten paths that lead to Mombasa, Bagamoyo, and the Zanzibar coast generally, and from the south of Lake Tanganyika to the Zambesi, the only effect of prohibitive measures by the Congo State will be to send the ivory to the East Coast.

If, on the other hand, whether by fiscal posts, armed force, or the arbitrary establishment of a state of siege the Government of the Independent State were able to enforce its Decrees on their eastern frontiers, a monopoly of the bulk of the ivory trade of Africa would be established that could hardly be looked upon as a faithful carrying out of the intention of the Powers at Berlin, where the Independent State of the Congo was practically created.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

P.S.—Since writing the above, we learn that the Commission has been summoned to meet to-morrow, Monday, at 3 P.M.

J. K.
M. G.

No. 359.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 22.)

(No. 71. Africa.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 21, 1890.

I CALLED upon Baron Mackay yesterday, and took with me a copy of the note addressed by the Prince de Chimay to the Dutch Minister at Brussels, transmitting the replies of the Powers to the Dutch proposals, which Lord Vivian had been good enough to send me that morning.

Baron Mackay was not acquainted with the wording of the Belgian note, not having seen the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is confined to his bed by a severe cold, since its reception here the previous day. He was very much pleased with the terms in which it was couched, and which, he said, seemed to him extremely friendly, and observed that its conciliatory character would be of great service to the Cabinet in bringing the matter to a final issue.

I said that I was very glad to find that the Belgian note produced a favourable impression upon him. I then explained that having gone to Brussels with despatches on the same day on which I had had my last interview with his Excellency, I had endeavoured, without committing him personally in any way, to explain to Lord Vivian and Baron de Lambermont the difficulty in which the Dutch Government found themselves placed, and the importance they attached to the wording of the reply to be returned to their proposals. I had found Baron de Lambermont most anxious to meet this desire, and he had in fact kindly consented, at my suggestion, to draft a telegram to the Powers, requesting their approval of a form of reply in the sense desired.

Baron Mackay was much gratified by what I told him of the conciliatory dispositions I had found at Brussels, and added some words of acknowledgment for the part I had taken in the affair.

I said that I believed I was only conforming myself to the views and intentions of Her Majesty's Government in contributing to the best of my ability to the settlement of a question in which two Powers in whom we were equally interested found themselves involved. In fact, I added, the object which had seemed to me most important throughout—and this I had taken upon myself to say at Brussels—was that nothing should be left behind that could impair in any way the good relations between the two countries.

Baron Mackay said that a Cabinet Council would probably be held to-morrow (Monday), when the replies from the Powers would be taken into consideration. Although his Excellency observed that he could not, before having conferred with his colleagues, pronounce a final opinion as to the decision that would be taken, I think it may safely be assumed that that decision will be agreeable to the wishes of the Powers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 360.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian.

(No. 88.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 22, 1890.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 80, you should earnestly press on the Belgian Government the great responsibility they will incur and the disgrace which would accrue to Belgium were she to be the cause of the failure of the great humanitarian work which the Brussels Conference has effected.

Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris has received a telegram couched in similar terms.

No. 361.

The Marquis of Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton.

(No. 23.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, December 22, 1890.

FROM information received from Brussels, it would appear that the ratification of the Final Act is threatened by differences which have arisen between the French and Belgian Governments.

You should earnestly press upon the French Government the great responsibility which they will incur and the disgrace to France were the failure of the great humanitarian work which has been effected by the Slave Trade Conference to be due to her.

A similar telegram has been dispatched to Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels.

No. 362.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 22.)

(No. 81. Slave Trade Conference.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 22, 1890, 7.30 P.M.

I LOST no time in carrying out the instructions contained in your Lordship's telegram No. 88 of to-day, desiring me earnestly to warn the Government of the very grave responsibility they would incur if the failure of the great work of the Brussels Conference could be attributed to them, and this warning has, I think, had its effect.

Proposals for the settlement of the difficulty that has arisen in connection with the export duties in the reserved zone are, I am informed, expected to-night from Paris, and I believe that your Lordship's message will operate, even though the proposals may not prove to be quite palatable, in inducing the Government to come to an agreement.

At the meeting of the Tariff Commission held to-day, both the French Minister and the President stated that the Congo State and France had all but arrived at a settlement of the points in dispute.

The Commission adjourned *sine die*, after announcing its completion of the work assigned to it.

No. 363.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 23.)*

(No. 21.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 22, 1890.

AT to-day's meeting of the Commission we stated that, in accordance with your Lordship's instructions, we were authorized to withdraw our opposition to the settlement of the Tariffs by direct negotiations between the Powers territorially interested, and to agree to the procedure demanded by the French Government.

M. Bourée, the French Minister, expressed his warm thanks for this communication, which he was sure would be received in Paris as a token of the good-will of Her Majesty's Government.

He went on to state that he had every reason to believe that an amicable settlement of the still outstanding questions was on the point of being arrived at, which would enable the Western Powers to come to a final agreement with regard to their Tariff.

At the invitation of the President, the United States' Minister read the Declaration, copy of which was forwarded to your Lordship in our despatch No. 17 of the 13th instant; and added that, as the United States' Senate would be prorogued on the 4th March, and would not meet again till after the time fixed for the exchange of ratifications of the General Act had expired, it was most important that he should have some assurance of the opinion of the Powers on this point.

This Declaration was accepted by us (in accordance with your Lordship's telegram to Lord Vivian No. 84, Africa, of the 17th instant), and was supported, on behalf of their respective Governments, by the French, Portuguese, German, and Italian Delegates.

The President then summed up the situation, and stated that he had this morning received a copy of the Tariff arrangement come to between the three Eastern Powers; and

he expressed the hope to be very shortly in possession of the Agreement to be applied to the three Congo States. There were, therefore, two courses open to the Commission—either to close their proceedings at once, in which case his office of President would lapse, and he would be unable to communicate the result of the Tariff system elaborated by the members of the Commission; or to adjourn *sine die*, leaving it an open question in what manner the communication as to the Tariffs should be made, and whether or not a further meeting should be summoned.

This latter view was unanimously adopted by the Commission.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

No. 364.

The Earl of Lytton to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 23.)

(No. 20. Africa.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, December 23, 1890.

IN accordance with the instructions contained in your Lordship's telegram No. 23 of yesterday, I have seen the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, and he informs me that France has accepted the Belgian proposal of a duty of 10 per cent. *ad valorem* on goods exported from the commercial zone, and of 25 per cent. on those exported from the reserved zone.

His Excellency added that the exchange of notes embodied in this agreement will take place this afternoon.

The French Government are also urging upon the Government of the Netherlands the immediate acceptance, without any reserve, of the arrangements which have been come to by the Slave Trade Conference and the States situated in the western basin of the Congo.

No. 365.

*The British Delegates at the Congo Tariff Conference to the Marquis of Salisbury.—
(Received December 24.)*

(No. 22.)
My Lord,

Brussels, December 22, 1890.

WE have the honour to inclose the Tariff Agreement for the eastern zone of the conventional basin of the Congo, signed by ourselves and our German and Italian colleagues at the British Legation this morning; and a copy of the note forwarding the operative clauses communicated by us to the President.

In this note we request Baron Lambermont to adopt the same course as to the communication of the Tariff Agreement for the eastern zone as that to be employed for the Western Agreement.

We have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN KIRK.
MARTIN GOSSELIN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 365.

Tariff Agreement for the Eastern Zone of the Conventional Basin of the Congo.

[Not printed.]

Inclosure 2 in No. 365.

Note addressed to Baron Lambermont.

M. le Président,

Bruxelles, le 22 Décembre, 1890.

NOUS avons l'honneur de vous transmettre ci-joint copie de la partie *dispositive* de l'accord qui, du consentement de nos Gouvernements, a été conclu entre nous, les

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3 U

Délégués de l'Allemagne, de la Grande-Bretagne, et de l'Italie, pour régler la question des Tarifs du groupe oriental du bassin conventionnel du Congo.

Nous vous prions de vouloir bien faire de la présente communication le même usage que vous ferez de la communication qui, comme on a fait prévoir, vous parviendra de la part du groupe occidental du dit bassin sur la tarification dans cette partie de la zone.

Jusqu'à ce qu'une pareille communication du groupe occidental ne vous sera pas parvenue, nous vous prions de vouloir regarder la nôtre comme non avenue.

Veillez, &c.

(Signé)

ALVENSLEBEN.

GÖHRING.

JOHN KIRK.

MARTIN GOSSELIN.

F. DE RENZIS.

A. BARDI.

No. 366.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(No. 33. Africa.)

Foreign Office, December 24, 1890.

Sir,

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 67, Africa, of the 13th instant, reporting a conversation with Baron Mackay on the subject of the Congo Commission, and I have to inform you that the language held by you to his Excellency on the occasion is approved.

I am, &c.

(Signed)

SALISBURY.

No. 367.

Mr. Greene to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 25.)

(Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

The Hague, December 25, 1890, 7 P.M.

NEWS has this day reached me from a trustworthy quarter to the effect that the Cabinet have come to the determination to bow to the will of the Powers in the matter of the Congo import duties. I have reason to believe that a communication to that effect will be addressed either to-morrow or on the following day to the Netherlands Minister in Brussels.

No. 368.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 26.)

(No. 82. Slave Trade Conference. Secret.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 26, 1890, 12:45 P.M.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 299 of yesterday's date, I am informed that the Belgian Minister at the Hague has telegraphed to-day that the Netherlands Government have finally resolved to yield to the representations of the Powers, and to sign the Acts of the Brussels Conference.

In communicating to me this information, Baron Lambertmont earnestly begged that it might not go any further, and, above all, that it should not be repeated to the Hague or to the Netherlands Minister in London, lest its premature publication should do harm.

It appears that the Tariff agreement arrived at between the Congo State and France has been accepted in principle by the Portuguese Government, but that it has been necessary to telegraph the details of the arrangement to Lisbon.

I understand that the only important question still remaining in dispute between

the Congo State and France arises from a disagreement as to whether the price of ivory in the reserved zone should be calculated for assessment of duty at the place of purchase or at the port of export; the French Government adopting the former, and the Government of the Congo State the latter, view.

No. 369.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 27.)

(No. 299.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 25, 1890.

LORD LYTTON'S telegram of the 23rd instant, reporting the final settlement of the difficulty between France and the Congo State respecting the export duties in the reserved zone, has not yet been officially confirmed here.

The principle of the arrangement has been accepted by both sides, but there is a point in the terms in which it is recorded on which an agreement has not yet been come to, while the sanction of the Portuguese Government appears to be still wanting, as the French Government have telegraphed to Lisbon for it.

They have also telegraphed to the Hague to press the Dutch Government to sign both Acts of the Brussels Conference, but I doubt if they will consent to do so until an agreement between the three Western Congo States has been finally concluded, and the term of the delay within which Holland must sign is getting dangerously near.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 370.

Sir R. Morier to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 29.)

(No. 5. Africa.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, December 25, 1890.

I DID not fail on receipt of your Lordship's telegram of the 10th instant, on the subject of the Slave Trade Conference at Brussels, to call upon M. de Giers, and urge his Excellency to send immediate instructions to the Representative of the Russian Government at Brussels expressive of their dissent from the counter-proposals made by the Dutch Government.

His Excellency, in reply to this communication, gave me a long and detailed account of the part played by Russia in connection with the Slave Trade Conference.

He said that Russia having no material interests whatever in connection with Africa, he had avoided to push himself in any way into the foreground, or to do anything beyond touching the question from the humanitarian point of view. Messrs. Martens and Ouroussoff, however, having had the good fortune to be of special use in the course of the Conference, and to receive the thanks of the Powers for their services, had given the Russian Government a prominence which was out of harmony with their lack of material interests in the question. The result had been that they had been specially asked by the Belgian Government to use their good offices in urging conciliatory action on the part of the Dutch Government. They had been successful in doing so, and it was mainly through their instrumentality that Holland had been persuaded not to separate herself from the Technical Commission. Under these circumstances, he was averse to taking any step which would have the appearance of assuming the initiative in a sense hostile to the Dutch Government. He had only two days ago sent stringent instructions to the Russian Minister at Brussels to do everything in conjunction with the other Powers to prevent the collapse of the Conference. The counter-proposals he himself regarded as perfectly impracticable, and it was therefore quite certain that without sending fresh instructions the Russian Minister would go with the other Powers in dissenting from them, and so secure the object which your Lordship has in view.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. B. D. MORIER.

No. 371.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 29.)

(No. 300. Slave Trade Conference. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Brussels, December 28, 1890.

NOTWITHSTANDING the reassuring telegram which was received here the day before yesterday from the Belgian Minister at the Hague, reporting that the Dutch Government had finally resolved to yield to the wishes of the Powers and to sign the Acts of the Brussels Conference, I have felt some uneasiness, as the delay granted to that Government for its signature approaches its termination, at the protraction of the negotiations between the French Government and the Congo State, for the settlement of the difficulties respecting the export duties, my impression being that the Dutch Government may delay giving effect to their decision until these difficulties are finally overcome to the satisfaction of the French Government.

I believe that these difficulties are more serious than they were at first represented to be, though I have not been able to get an exact explanation of what they are; but I believe the most important point of difference to be the price at which ivory should be calculated for assessment of the export duty in the reserved zone, and I understand that this is being met by a proposal to assess the duty on the official quotations of the price of ivory.

However this may be, Baron Lambermont has sent me an assurance that he has every reason to believe that the proposals he is sending by special messenger to Paris to-day will satisfactorily solve all outstanding unsettled questions, and that a final agreement on all points may be expected to-morrow. I hope it may be so, but the Portuguese Government will still have to be consulted.

I have lost no opportunity of reminding him of your Lordship's serious warning against any action on the part of the Congo Government which would justify the reproach that the failure of the work of the Brussels Conference was attributable to them, and my insistence on this warning has apparently caused a certain reserve of late in communicating to me the progress of the negotiations at Paris.

I have, &c.
(Signed) VIVIAN.

No. 372.

Mr. Greene to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 29.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

The Hague, December 29, 1890.

SINCE I telegraphed to your Lordship on Thursday last the Government have changed their mind, and deferred sending their answer to Brussels for a few days. It will, however, I learn, be dispatched to-day or to-morrow, and will be in the sense which I have already had the honour to notify to your Lordship.

No. 373.

Mr. Greene to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 30.)

(No. 72. Africa. Very Confidential.)

My Lord,

The Hague, December 29, 1890.

IT appears that the Netherlands Government are at last about to reply to the note addressed to Baron Gericke by Baron Lambermont on the 18th instant on the subject of the Congo import duties.

On the receipt of the note, with the purport of which the Government were of course sufficiently acquainted beforehand, at the Hague on the 19th instant, an answer was drafted which was submitted to the Cabinet at a meeting held on Wednesday last, the 24th instant. The draft was laid before each member of the Cabinet individually, and was approved by all in turn.

It was at first proposed to dispatch the answer to the Netherlands Minister at Brussels on the following day (as I had the honour to inform your Lordship in my telegram of the 25th instant), but this idea was subsequently abandoned in conse-

quence of a meeting of the First Chamber of the States-General being fixed for to-day (Monday), at which it was no doubt surmised that some awkward questions might possibly be asked of the Ministers, and it has now, I understand, been arranged that the answer shall not be dispatched until the Chamber has broken up this evening or to-morrow.

The note, after acknowledging the receipt of the answers of the Powers to the Dutch counter-proposals, proceeds forthwith to state the determination arrived at by the Government to yield to the pressure which has been brought to bear upon them, and, in view of the fact that no other solution of the difficulty is open to them, expresses their desire to do all that lies in their power to further the beneficent resolutions of the Brussels Conference in the cause of humanity. They are prepared, therefore, to affix their signature to the Acts of that Conference.

At the same time, the note goes on to say, the Government of the Netherlands do not in any way withdraw their objections to the mode in which this end is to be secured, but maintain the justice and legality of their own contentions; in fact, they aver that the means which have now been decided upon by the Powers, far from succeeding in their object, will only prove disastrous to the very ends for which they have been adopted.

Such I gather is, briefly stated, the purport of the note which has been approved by the Cabinet.

Meanwhile, the greatest mystery is observed here in official circles, and, indeed, generally, as to the whole affair, and it is impossible to obtain any direct information from the Government as to the nature of their intentions. In proof of this, I may inform your Lordship that I had a visit yesterday from the Austrian Minister, who assured me that he had been on two successive days to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, but had been unable to extract anything definite from him, and that Baron Saurma, the German Minister, as well as Marquis Spinola, the Italian Representative, had fared no better.

M. Hartsen has not ingratiated himself with the Representatives of the Powers here by the adoption of a studied ambiguity, only worthy of the oracle of Delphi, in his interviews with them, and this fact, added to the circumstance already reported to your Lordship, that he has on two occasions recently veered round from his statements of the previous day, in a fashion characteristic of the windmills of his native country, has not helped to strengthen his Excellency's position with the Foreign Ministers accredited to the Court of his Sovereign.

The press, too, has been absolutely silent for several days on the burning question, and although it is a matter of common knowledge that the Government must give their decision within, comparatively speaking, a few hours, no comments are made or conjectures hazarded as to what will be the outcome of their deliberations. In fact, from the Cabinet downwards, there appears to be a sulky disposition to "boycott" the foreign Representatives and the public generally in the matter, which makes the endeavour to ascertain the intentions of the Government anything but an agreeable task.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CONYNGHAM GREENE.

No. 374.

Lord Vivian to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received December 30.)

(No. 83. Slave Trade Conference.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Brussels, December 30, 1890.

BARON GERICKE, the Netherlands Minister here, has just sent an official notification to the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the effect that his Government have given him full powers to sign the General Act of the Brussels Conference and the Declaration of the 2nd July, and I am informed that the signature will take place this afternoon at 4 o'clock.

It is believed here that all the questions in dispute between France and the Congo State have been finally settled, but in case any further difficulty should arise, Baron Lambertont begs that the information as to Baron Gericke's instructions should not be repeated to Paris before the Dutch Minister has actually signed the Acts.

No. 375.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir H. Rumbold.

(No. 34. Africa.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 31, 1890.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 71, Africa, of the 21st instant respecting the difficulties which have been raised by the Dutch Government in connection with the establishment of import duties in the Congo State, and I have to inform you that your action as reported therein is approved.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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